真剣で私に恋しなさい!

5

健速
Takehaya

六畳間の侵略者!? 5
「まっ、真希ちゃんっ!?」

不遇な日々を乗り越えて

魔法少女ゆりかが報われる時が来た!!

「この娘を守りながら、私と戦えるかしらっ!?」
真希は杖の先を晴海につきつける。

健速 たけはや

「あの日々をもういちど」（ＨＪ文庫）で作家デビュー。このたび無事に引っ越しが完了、新居から本作を執筆中。静かな場所なので仕事ははかどるものの、なかなか段ボールが片付かないでいる。

ポコ

兵庫生まれのイラストレーター。
好物はやきそば。最近は富士宮焼きそばにハマリ中。

カバーイラスト／ポコ　装丁／渡辺宏一

六畳間の侵略者!?

5

健速
Takehaya

た03-02-05

健速

六畳間の侵略者!? 5

ＨＪ文庫

HOBBY JAPAN

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魔法少女であることを誰にも信じて貰えない、悲劇の《コスプレイヤー》虹野ゆりか。しかし、そんな彼女に大転機が訪れる。突然の転校生が、なんと一〇六号室の魔力を狙うゆりかの宿敵・ダークネスレインボーの少女だったのだ。「これで自分が魔法少女だって証明できる！」と大喜びのゆりかだったが――。六畳間圧縮型ラブコメ、今回は泣かせます!?

HOBBY JAPAN

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ころな荘の関係者たち
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里見孝太郎
ころな荘二〇六号室の、いちおうの借主で主人公。
先輩
桜庭晴海
孝太郎の所属する編み物部の部長で、一年先輩。ちょっと病弱。
悪友
松平賢治
孝太郎の幼なじみで親友。
大家
笠置静香
孝太郎の同級生でころな荘の大家さん。

東本願早苗
想い出のころな荘一〇六号室に取り憑き、独占を狙う幽霊。
幽霊
クラノ＝キリハ
一〇六号室を祭壇化、それを足がかりとして地上侵略を狙う地底人。
地底人
虹野ゆりか
自称〝魔法少女〟。一〇六号室に危機が迫っていると主張する。
コスプレイヤー?
ティアミリス・グレ・フォルトーゼ
皇位継承の試練のため一〇六号室とその住人の支配を狙う宇宙人。
ルースカニア・ナイ・パルドムシーハ
ティアの付き人で世話係。
宇宙人

Yurika's Big Plan

Part 1

Monday, November 16

“Nijino-san, u-uhm…”

Harumi mustered all of her courage and spoke up.

“What is it?”

However, Yurika had no idea how Harumi was feeling. She looked innocently at Harumi as she sipped on her orange juice through a straw.

“A-Actually, I want to ask you…”

Quite a bit of time had passed before Harumi was able to say those words. Because of that, the coffee in front of her had gotten cold. Although it was placed in a paper cup which made it cool faster, a considerable amount of time had still passed.

“Tell me! I'll do anything for your sake, Sakuraba-senpai!”

Yurika accepted her request with a smile before she had even heard what it was about. They had become friends when they ran together during the sports festival. To Yurika, Harumi was a senior she respected, and an irreplaceable friend. Because of that, the thought of refusing a request from her never entered her mind.

Seeing Yurika like that, Harumi let out a sigh of relief.

“Thank you, Nijino-san.”

“So, what is it that you wanted to ask me?”

“T-That's…”

Harumi began hesitating. Her cheeks were dyed red as she looked down.

Keep it together, Harumi! If you back down now, nothing will change!

Harumi scolded herself and looked back up. Her face was still red, but her determination shone through.

“What I want to ask you… is about… Satomi-kun…”

Satomi-kun. The moment she spoke his name, Harumi's heart began pounding. This happened every single time she mentioned his name and she was starting to reach her limit, which was why she was now facing Yurika.

“Satomi-san? Ah, did he say something mean to you!?”

The moment Yurika heard Koutarou's name, the first thing that popped into her mind was his everyday behavior. He wasn't a bad person, but he still had a rough side. Besides, no matter how much she tried, she couldn't get him to believe in magic. Yurika figured that Harumi had been hurt by Koutarou by saying something careless.

“He can be pretty rough from time to time!”

“N-No, it's not like that!”

“But you know, Sakuraba-senpai, even though he's like that, he has a gentle side to him. So just—”

“That's not it. I know that Satomi-kun is a good person, that's why I'm so troubled!”

“…Eh?”

Yurika's Big Plan

Harumi's tone left Yurika astounded. She completely forgot what she was about to say.

“Satomi-kun is a good person. He understands the struggles of others. He's diligent, earnest and reckless. But, that's why I'm troubled.”

Harumi's tone of voice returned to normal. Sensing that, Yurika took a sip of her orange juice and straightened up to listen to what Harumi had to say.

“What do you mean?”

“T-That's… I… want to get along with Satomi-kun…”

“Get along? But you already get along so well. You're knitting together every day in the knitting society.”

To Yurika, Koutarou and Harumi already got along quite well. Aside from their daily club activities in the knitting society, their acting in the play during the culture festival made that obvious. To her, the two of them were already in a wonderful senior/junior relationship.

“I don't mean it in that way… I mean in… uhm… a different…”

Harumi's cheeks turned even redder and her gaze fell down onto the table. She was too embarrassed to look Yurika in the face. Her fists on top of her knees were trembling as she barely managed to squeeze out a few words.

“Y-You meant it like that.”

Catching on to what Harumi meant, Yurika's cheek started to turn red as well. The two of them then looked at each other while blushing for a while. However, this time, the silence didn't last for as long.

I need to keep it together… this won't do!

Harumi scolded herself again and started speaking.

“But… Satomi-kun is… treasuring me, but because of that he doesn't want to go any further…”

“Ah… that might be the case…”

Yurika could understand what Harumi was saying.

“Satomi-san is mindful about the strangest of things.”

“…That's why I… want Satomi-kun to treat me more roughly… like he does with you or, uhm, Theiamillis-san…”

“Like me and Theia-chan?”

Those were some unexpected words. Yurika would rather be treated like Harumi. She wanted him to treat her kindly, and respect what she was saying. In short, she wanted him to believe that she was a magical girl. However, Harumi herself said she wanted to be treated like Yurika. This was quite unexpected for Yurika.

“Y-Yes. So please tell me. What do I have to do to get Satomi-kun to treat me like he treats you or Theiamillis-san?”

At that moment, Harumi was remembering Koutarou when he was practicing his acting with Theia.

If Satomi-kun treated me the same way he treats Theiamillis-san…

Koutarou definitely wasn't gentle to Theia. He had no problems voicing complaints, at times they would even end up in fist fights. But Harumi knew that Koutarou was only complaining or fighting

because he trusted Theia. Compared to that, Harumi was being treated like a customer, or at best a princess. He was being too careful around her.

“… Maybe I should start by changing my appearance? Theiamillis-san has a lively impression. And you Nijino-san, you have- cosplay was it? You're good at that…”

Harumi began playing with her long hair. If it came down to it, she was ready to cut it short. It seemed that she was serious about this.

“Y-You shouldn't do that! Nothing good will come from being treated like us! Satomi-san is mean to us and has no problems hitting us on the head!”

“But, Satomi-kun has never hit me or been mean to me…”

“I haven't been treasured or treated gently—”

Ah…

Yurika noticed it halfway through her sentence and stopped herself.

I might have been treasured by Satomi-san… and been treated gently…

As always, he wouldn't believe her when it came to her being a magical girl, but he had helped her with the Hercules Beetle, and when their scenarios had been rejected, they had eaten cup noodles together to drown their sorrows. Yurika had been bullied and done something stupid and been hit for it. She had also been treasured and been treated gently. She had experienced all of it.

It might be the same for Theia-chan. In that case…

Yurika finally realized what Harumi wanted to say.

“I understand, Sakuraba-senpai! Although I might not be of much use, let this Nijino Yurika help!”

“T-Thank you, Nijino-san!”

Yurika smiled and accepted Harumi’s request. Tears of happiness formed in the corners of Harumi's eyes as she smiled back. The smile Harumi showed Yurika was so beautiful that Yurika lost her breath.

If Satomi-san saw this, he would be KO'd instantly…

Yurika couldn't help but feel that the beautiful smile was wasted on her.

“Now that I think about it, Satomi-san teases us when we're saying or doing something.”

“I see…”

Harumi started writing in her notebook. Yurika had been lecturing her about Koutarou for a while now.

I see. So Satomi-san hasn't said anything mean unprovoked…?

As she was explaining to Harumi, Yurika once again got a feel for what kind of person Koutarou was.

“But when it goes too far, he will hit me on reflex. Since he's quick to get into fights, it always ends up like that.”

“He often gets into fights with Matsudaira-san as well.”

“It seems that Mackenzie-san is special. Even though they're always fighting, they're still friends. Is that how men behave?”

“Maybe something happened that far outweighs their daily fights a long time ago.”

“Maybe… Oh right, we're talking about Satomi-san right now.”

Yurika returned them to the original topic. Right now, they needed to discuss what Harumi should do from now on.

“Simply put, I think you should be more selfish, Sakuraba-senpai.”

“Selfish?”

Harumi blinked repeatedly as she heard that word.

“Yes. Compared to me and Theia-chan, you hardly say anything at all to Satomi-san.”

“Hardly say anything… That's not what I've been trying to do…”

“Well, let's say you're feeling thirsty.”

Since Harumi wasn't following her, Yurika began explaining using an example.

“Yes.”

“What would you normally do, Sakuraba-senpai?”

“Uhm… I think I'd pour some tea for myself and ask if Satomi-kun would like some too.”

“In mine or Theia-chan's case, we wouldn't serve any tea.”

“Is that so?”

Yurika nodded.

“I'm broke, so I'd freeload off of Satomi-san. Theia-chan is a prince- I mean, a lady, so she would tell Satomi-san to pour some tea for her.”

“I-Is that so!?”

Harumi's eyes open wide, revealing her surprise.

“Yes. So he would yell at us to quit messing around.”

“I-I see… that's good to know.”

Impressed, Harumi took notes. Freeloading or demanding Koutarou to pour tea for her was something that had never crossed her mind.

“In my case, I start complaining and Satomi-san would eventually give up and share something to drink with me. In Theia-chan's case, it turns into a fist fight.”

“… That's something I could never imagine…”

After hearing Yurika's example, Harumi was astounded.

But you can't be surprised, Harumi. I need to do the same thing!

But she soon pumped herself up again.

“Even if you tell me to be more selfish, Nijino-san, I don't know how…”

“It's okay. I've read Shoujo manga for over ten years. I have already thoroughly researched the topic!”

“As expected from Nijino-san!”

She's not just a cosplayer for show. How reliable…

Harumi appreciated Yurika in a way she would rather not be appreciated in.

“To start, I think you should invite him to a date.”

Yurika's Big Plan

“D-D-Date!?”

Hearing those words, Harumi was knocked out of breath.

“Yes! You selfishly say you want to go somewhere together. On top of that, you go out together and you'll grow even closer! It's a two-stage plan!”

Yurika put her hands down on the table and leaned forwards towards Harumi.

“I-I understand what you mean but… isn't it a bit soon… for a d-date…”

Harumi was shy and modest. Having suddenly been told to go on a date, she didn't know what she should do.

“It's okay. In this case, even a group date will do. We'll use that as an entry point and gradually turn into a date for just the two of you!”

At first they could start off with a group date. And as the date continued, the numbers would gradually decrease until it was just the two of them. It was a common happening in the Shoujo mangas that Yurika adored.

“T-Then, will you come with us, Nijino-san?”

“I understand. Let me accompany you.”

Yurika nodded with confidence. But she still hadn't noticed a fatal flaw in her plan.

Part 2

“Ah, stop spilling! Don't make any noise!”

“Don't be unreasonable!”

Yurika's Big Plan

Yurika's Big Plan

Theia roared at Koutarou. It was a common scene during dinner in room 106, but today was slightly different. Koutarou wasn't holding chopsticks in his hands, but rather several strange metallic tools.

“It's not unreasonable! How many times do I have to tell you to think of this as an aristocrat’s dinner party!”

“There's no way I can eat properly with these dentist tools as tableware!

“W-R-O-N-G! That's exclusively for salad! Why are you trying to use that to eat rice!?”

Koutarou was holding Forthorthe's traditional tableware. They were probably Forthorthe's equivalence of a knife and fork, but their large number and variation confused Koutarou.

“There's so many, I can't remember all of them right away!”

“I showed you an example just a moment ago! I'll do it one more time so make sure you look! You do it like this! Shee! Yhou chan eaht it jhust fine! Dhid you get iht?”

“As if I could get it by just seeing it once, idiot! It's not a 100 colored pencils set!”

“Whaht dho you mean bhy idioht!? Thaht'sh noht the prohper whay to talhk to your masther!”

“Your highness, it's poor manners to speak with food in your mouth.”

Although the culture festival had ended, Koutarou's knight training was still continuing. Koutarou could have just stopped, but he couldn't refuse when he was told it would help his acting for the second half of the “The Silver Princess and the Blue Knight.'' He wanted to get to a level where he wouldn't hold Harumi's acting back.

“Heh, you're getting scolded.”

“*munch munch*”

When Koutarou made fun of Theia, she hurriedly chewed up all the food in her mouth. As she swallowed it all down, she brought her face closer to Koutarou.

“…Koutarou, it seems you really want to die.”

“That's not true. I'm all set for a long life.”

Veins appeared on Theia's face while Koutarou continued to grin. Neither of them showed any signs of backing down.

“If you want I could change the manuscript to have you stand buck naked on the stage.”

“That's impossible for you because you adore the Blue Knight. If it was just me you might, but when the Blue Knight gets involved, you can't do as you please.”

“Tsk, you've picked up some needless knowledge.”

“Your praise is an honor to me, princess Theiamillis.”

“Aaaargh! Why don't you try to show me any respect!?”

“Hmm… it's my hobby?”

“Don't ask me that!!”

Koutarou and Theia's argument began heating up. It was common for the two of them to fight, but lately it had started getting more intense.

“What does it matter, just hurry up and eat, geez!”

Yurika's Big Plan

Sanae could taste what Koutarou did when she clung onto him. Since Koutarou and Theia were fighting, Sanae had to wait for dinner. Because of that, Sanae pouted as the two of them continued to argue.

“What's with this drill!? What am I supposed to eat with this!?”

“This is for breaking the hard shell of a nut from northern Mastir! It's a tool used for traditional dinner!”

“They're not even listening… call me when you're done, okay?”

Still pouting, Sanae let go of Koutarou and floated away.

“Geez, I can't tell if you get along or not…”

“…”

Yurika was focused on the food lined up on the table. When she heard Sanae's complaints, she looked up. Since she was broke, she ate whenever she got the chance, and since Koutarou was going to train how to eat like nobles do, Yurika had been invited as a guest. She had been eating without holding back, but hearing Sanae's complaints, she stopped moving her hands.

“Get along well or not… huh…”

Having stopped her eating, Yurika stared at Koutarou and Theia who were still arguing.

“Then bring me that nut! This drill is no problem for me!”

“You said it! In that case, I'll bring it out. Ruth!”

“Yes, your highness.”

As the situation developed, Yurika showed no signs of intervening.

What can I say, for good or bad, there's no way I could join in… I can kind of understand why Sakuraba-senpai is so worried…

Since her discussion with Harumi, she had taken a closer look at Koutarou and Theia's relationship. She felt like she could clearly understand what had Harumi so worried.

“Something must have happened while we weren't around that changed their relationship.”

“Kiriha-san.”

Yurika turned around and faced Kiriha, who was smiling as she poured herself a cup of tea since she was finished eating.

“What makes you think that?”

“If they really hated each other, they wouldn't be that stubborn.”

Kiriha put down the kettle and smiled wryly.

“I might not be able to stand idly for much longer. If I'm going to seduce Koutarou, I should hurry.”

“…That might be true.”

Yurika ignored whether or not Kiriha was serious. She felt that it would be for the better if Harumi jumped into action sooner rather than later.

If for some reason, the two of them would stop being so stubborn, there's no mistaking they would get much closer in an instant. Yurika couldn't stop herself from feeling that way.

Part 3

“This nut is as hard as your head!”

“Hmph, you're all talk. That's why I said you needed to practice.”

In the serious atmosphere, Theia carefully reached her hand over the tea table. Today’s game was Jenga. They pulled out a piece from the bottom and placed it on the top. If the Jenga fell over, it counted as a loss. Although the rules were simple, it required a lot more concentration and precise motions than one would think. Because of this, there were lots of risks one could take. As they put the pieces on top they could purposefully place it in a way that made balancing the pieces harder. They could also apply pressure to the next player. That was also the reason why Koutarou had been calling out to Theia. He was trying to interrupt her in the middle of her turn, causing her to fail.

“Theia is probably so thick headed because she grew up eating those.”

“I don't have any problems using this thick head to split your skull you know —Uwah!?”

In her excitement, Theia had caused the Jenga to shake, however the puzzle merely shook; it didn't collapse.

“Phew… that was close.”

Theia wiped the cold sweat off her brow and placed the piece she pulled out on top. Because of the way she placed it, the Jenga began leaning.

“Tsk.”

“Fufun, as if I'd let it go your way.”

“Alright, then I'm next. Koutarou.”

“Yeah.”

After Theia was Sanae's turn. However, Sanae wasn't good at doing complex moves like this on her own, so she possessed Koutarou and used him. She clung onto his back with her arms around his neck, and began controlling his hand.

“This still feels strange, no matter how many times you do it.”

“This is the mysterious girl, Sanae-chan's power!”

Koutarou's hands that normally moved in such a rough fashion were now moving delicately and gently. The appearance changed greatly, just by the person controlling them. His hands now appeared oddly feminine.

“Ei!”

Sanae quickly brought Koutarou's hands towards the puzzle. Although they were feminine, the motion was swift, fitting of her age.

“I've been wondering for a while but, won't that have a bad effect on your body?”

“Yurika, don't just casually say such terrifying things!”

Yurika's comment disturbed Koutarou. But since Sanae was in control of his body, his hands didn't shake.

“But in anime, people possessed by ghost always scream.”

“It's fine. I have no intention of cursing Koutarou to death.”

Sanae pulled out a piece while humming.

Yurika's Big Plan

“Sanae-sama gets along well Satomi-sama after all.”

“Yeah.”

After Ruth said that, Sanae smiled and made the piece float in the air. It flew up to the top and landed.

“Alright!”

“Sanae, you can do it without me, can't you?”

“I can place the pieces, but the problem is pulling them out.”

“Is that so…”

“…My, the two of you get along so well.”

If Sanae-chan wasn't a ghost, Sakuraba-senpai would probably have one more problem to worry about…

That's what Yurika thought as she stared at Koutarou and Sanae.

“There's no need to worry, Yurika.”

Seeing Yurika staring, Kiriha assumed that Yurika was worried about Koutarou and called out to her.

“Sanae is showing no signs of leaking spiritual energy that might harm Koutarou.”

“Really?”

“Karama, Korama.”

“Yes Ho-!”

“Leave it to us Ho-!”

Responding to Kiriha's call, the two haniwas appeared from under the tea table.

“Sanae-chan's current form is stable so she's hardly leaking any spiritual energy that might affect Koutarou Ho-”

“Our spiritual energy sensor can't detect any evil spiritual power either Ho.”

“In fact, by doing that, Koutarou is using his muscles in ways he normally wouldn’t so it might even be good for him Ho.”

“I see, then that's alright.”

Normally, an ordinary person wouldn't understand what Karama and Korama were saying, but she was a magical girl so she made an understanding expression after listening to their explanation.

“Koutarou, they're saying you're getting healthier thanks to me.”

“I was healthy from the start so I don't really feel it.”

“Geez, you're always like that! Why can't you just be more honest and say 'Thanks Sanae-chan, you're cute as always!'”

Pouting, Sanae began squeezing Koutarou's neck.

“T-The spiritual power is leaking.”

“Hmph, you really aren't cute at all.”

Koutarou hit where it hurt, causing Sanae to pout and loosen her grip on Koutarou's neck.

Yurika's Big Plan

“That amount of leaking spiritual energy is hardly harmful.”

“Sounds like it's okay.”

“You're all so mean! I'll prank you in the middle of the night!”

Kiriha and Yurika laughed at Sanae. In return, she stuck her tongue out at them.

“Next up is Satomi-sama.”

“Oh, right. I almost forgot.”

Koutarou spaced out as he looked at Sanae, Yurika and Kiriha, but he finally recalled that it was his turn after Ruth reminded him.

“I hate slowpokes.”

“I don't mind if you hate me.”

“What!? You're telling me you don't need a princess's love!?”

“I don't.”

Koutarou dismissively waved his hand at Theia and started reaching towards the Jenga tower.

“Then, who do you want to be loved by, Satomi-san?”

“Woah!?”

Because of Yurika's perfectly timed question, Koutarou almost pushed the tower over. Fortunately, he was able to stop his hand just in time.

“T-That was close.”

“Tsk.”

Theia unhappily clicks her tongue while Koutarou put his hand on his chest and let out a large sigh of relief.

“Who does he want to be loved by? That's obviously this Sanae-chan. Right, Koutarou?”

“I'm interested in your answer as well. It'll serve as a good reference for the future.”

Sanae and Kiriha curiously looked towards Koutarou.

“Go on then. If it's not me, then who is it?”

“…”

Theia was in a somewhat bad mood after being told that Koutarou didn't mind if she hated him. On the other side of the table, Ruth was looking at him with hopeful eyes. All of the girls in room 106 were now staring at Koutarou. Who would he pick out of all of them?

“That's obvious.”

However, Koutarou didn't hesitate for even a moment.

“It's Sakuraba-senpai. If a wonderful and beautiful girl like that said she hated me, I wouldn't be able to go on living.”

“Eeeeeeeeeeeeh!? It's not me!?”

“… As expected, that's who you'd go for.”

Sanae stood up and complained while Kiriha sipped on her tea.

“That woman again!? I can't stand being rated below her! Correct yourself right away!”

“I'm lower than a beetle, of course…”

Yurika's Big Plan

Theia blew her top and Ruth sulked. The four girls each reacted in a different way.

“…Sakuraba-senpai huh…”

“How can I put this, I want her to remember me as a good junior.”

“What's wrong with me!?”

“Is a frontal attack the only way left…”

“Correct yourself! I'm more charming than her!”

“I thought this would happen, of course…”

This could be a problem. Koutarou wants Sakuraba-senpai to like him, but he's fine with the current distance between them… I need to do something to get them closer!

Unlike the others around her that were getting excited, Yurika was worrying about Harumi. Koutarou liked Harumi the most, but he didn't have any intention of moving their relationship further. That was because he was indebted to her and he deeply respected her. He didn't think of himself as someone who was suitable for Harumi. But Harumi herself did.

If something wasn't done about this misunderstanding, there was a high chance that Koutarou would get together with another girl. It wasn't just something that happened in Shoujo mangas, but in reality too.

As I thought, a date is the only way! If I go with them and manage to leave the two of them on their own…!

Yurika was all ready to get Koutarou and Harumi together-

“Just think about it! Take Yurika for example! How could I see someone with such an excessive cosplay hobby as a romantic interest!? You guys are the same!”

-until Koutarou said those words.

“What’s ‘excessive cosplay hobby’ supposed to mean!? Just when I'm feeling worried about you!”

At that moment, Yurika began scheming to get in the way between Koutarou and Harumi.

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

Part 1

Tuesday, November 17

“Sakuraba-senpai and Satomi-san definitely can't go out! Definitely!!”

The next day, even after reaching her classroom, Yurika was still furious. She couldn't forgive Koutarou for saying she had an excessive cosplay hobby.

“He has no problems trampling on someone else’s feelings!”

Since she had been planning to hook up Koutarou and Harumi, she didn't care that Koutarou didn't see her as a romantic interest. But she couldn't forgive him for what he said as she was worrying about him. If the same thing were to happen with Harumi as with her… if Koutarou didn't believe something Harumi said… Yurika couldn't accept Koutarou and Harumi going out as she thought about that.

“I can't have that kind of person going out with Sakuraba-senpai. I need to come up with a way to get her to give up on him…”

Just a while ago, she had decided on backing up Harumi with all of her might. But right now she was dead set on keeping the two apart. Because of that, Yurika had been scheming since she woke up this morning.

“I could bring Sakuraba-senpai with me and show her Koutarou as he's together with another girl… or I could set a trap to make him look like a fool…”

She was the magical girl of love and courage ☆ Rainbow Yurika. Getting in the way of others love affairs was the complete opposite of what she was supposed to do, but she was blinded by rage and didn't mind whatsoever.

“What's up with Yurika? She's been like that all morning.”

“Who knows… It's Yurika we're talking about…”

Koutarou scratched his head as he looked at Yurika's back from his desk. Sanae was floating nearby and did the same as she stared at Yurika with a confused look.

At the back of the classroom next to Koutarou and Sanae were Kiriha, Theia, Ruth and Shizuka. After hearing Koutarou, they were all looking at Yurika.

“Koutarou, it's late November. The end of the year Comiha event is close.”

Comic Heart Network, or Comiha, held a large scale event twice a year related to comics. It was the biggest cosplaying event in the country.

“Oh! So she's thinking about what outfit to wear!”

“Is that the cosplay festival thing?”

“Yeah, if she's like that, Yurika-chan must be really into it…”

“I see, now that you mention it, I can feel her eagerness all the way over here.”

Koutarou, Theia, Shizuka and Ruth all nodded in agreement after Kiriha mentioned Comiha. In their minds, Yurika was a hardcore cosplayer. Besides, because of her poor grades, they had a hard time imagining that she was thinking so hard about her homework.

“Is that really it? I can kind of feel some strange spiritual energy coming out from her…”

However, Sanae had a different opinion. As a ghost, she could feel that the spiritual energy that Yurika was emitting was different from normal.

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

“Well, she's been strange from the start.”

However, Sanae didn't think much of it. In the end, even she thought of Yurika as just a cosplayer.

“Kou, what are you talking about?”

Kenji came walking by holding the class diary. Since he was on day duty, he had come from the faculty office.

“Take a look at that.”

“Is there something wrong with Nijino-san?”

“She's been making a complex expression like that since this morning, so we were wondering what for.”

“Ah, now that you mention it, she has.”

After Koutarou explained the situation to Kenji, he nodded.

“She has this kind of atmosphere around her, it's like she's about to pull out a knife.”

“Mackenzie, are you speaking from experience?”

“…N-No.”

Kenji shook his head vigorously, cursing himself.

“Liar! You definitely are!”

“I wasn't, really!”

As Kenji shook his head, Shizuka continued.

“Mackenzie-kun's experience aside, we're suspecting that Yurika might be thinking about what to cosplay.”

“No, she's definitely about to pull out a knife!”

It didn't occur to Koutarou that the tip of that knife was pointed towards him.

“Shut it! … But it might be as you said, Kasagi-san.”

Kenji nodded at Shizuka's words. Seeing that, Koutarou brought the topic back to Yurika.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, I'm on day duty today, right? So when I went to the faculty office to get the diary there was a girl I'd never seen next to the teacher.”

“A girl? Did you hit on her? You sure can't be discrete can you, Mackenzie. I'm impressed.”

This time, Koutarou nodded.

“You're wrong! Why would I do that!?”

“Hard to believe those are words coming from Mackenzie-kun, who had a girl pull a knife on him.”

“Let me finish talking, you just shut up.”

“Got it. I'll shut up and think about that girl and her knife.”

Koutarou shut up and began grinning.

“Ugh, I let something stupid slip…”

“Mackenzie, come on, continue.”

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

“R-Right. Well, it seems that girl is a transfer student coming to this class.”

“A transfer student!?”

Everyone was surprised.

“And it seems that she's acquainted with Nijino-san…”

In November, as the days were getting colder, what had arrived along with those cold winds was an off-season transfer student.

Part 2

Being called into the classroom by the teacher, a girl with indigo colored eyes entered. Having heard that she was acquainted with Yurika, Koutarou imagined she would be noisy and unsteady, just like Yurika. But in reality the transfer student was quiet and looked like she had a strong spirit.

“For an acquaintance, she sure is quite different from Yurika.”

“Couldn't she just be a normal acquaintance?”

“That's possible.”

Because she seemed too different from Yurika, Koutarou and Sanae whispered to one another.

The transfer student bowed with a sharp movement.

“Hello everybody, my name is Aika Maki. It's nice to meet you.”

“Maki-san had to transfer to this school because of her parents’ circumstances. Please treat her well, everyone.”

After the transfer student's introduction and the teachers follow-up the classroom immediately got noisy. To high schoolers, transfer students were that big of a deal. Everyone naturally got excited.

“M-Maki-chan!?”

However, Yurika was shocked. She stood up so fast her chair went flying. Her eyes were opened wide.

“W-Why are you in this school, Maki-chan!?”

“Long time no see, Yurika-san.”

Maki revealed a calm smile. The two of them had completely opposite reactions.

“Right, I forgot, Maki-san is Yurika-san's acquaintance, right? Can I ask you to look after her, Yurika-san?”

The teacher's words didn't reach Yurika, she was far too surprised. Not only were her eyes wide open, but her mouth was too.

You're surprised aren't you, Nijino Yurika? In this situation, it's not like I can't understand how you must feel…

On the outside, Maki was smiling, But on the inside, she was calmly observing Yurika. Maki was somewhat satisfied that Yurika had reacted in the way she had expected. But that satisfaction of hers was short-lived.

“Maki-chan! Maki-chaaaaan!”

Yurika's expression completely changed. She repeated Maki's name, while tears filled her eyes and a bright smile appeared on her face.

“E-Eh?”

While Maki had been taken off guard by Yurika's reaction, Yurika ran up to the front of the classroom and grabbed her hands.

“Thank you for coming!! Maki-chaaaaaan!”

“Whaaaaat!?”

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

This time, Maki's eyes opened wide in surprise. Yurika held Maki's hands and shook them up and down. Her reaction was far, far away from what Maki had expected.

“I was waiting, I was always waiting! I've waited impatiently for Maki-chan and the others to come!”

“Waited!? For me!? W-Why!?”

Maki had expected Yurika to be shocked and shaking with fear. But her reaction had been the opposite. She rejoiced and welcomed her with open arms.

“Why did it take you so long to come!? I suffered so many hardships because of that!”

“Suffered?”

J-Just what is this girl saying?

Those words utterly confused Maki. Yurika's suffering was supposed to start when Maki had appeared. Instead, it seemed like she was finally free from her suffering. Maki had no idea what was going on. While Maki was still confused, Yurika grabbed her hands and turned around towards her classmates.

“Satomi-san, Satomi-san! Look, please look!”

While Yurika was shaking Maki's hands up and down, she called out to a boy in the corner of the classroom.

Satomi? It's that boy…

Maki knew who he was. Satomi Koutarou. He was the boy that lived in room 106.

“What is it, Yurika?”

“They came! They finally came!”

“Who?”

Koutarou calmly responded to Yurika, who was overly excited.

“The enemy!! The evil magical girls have finally come!”

“Wha!?”

In that moment, Maki's heart almost stopped. As Yurika had said, Aika Maki was an evil magical girl, Magical Girl Dark Navy. She was part of the magic association, Darkness Rainbow. She was the magical girl who used purple magic. However, good or evil, a magical girl was forbidden from revealing their identity. That was because if magic was discovered, it wouldn't help either faction. Magical girls fought throughout the ages while keeping their identities hidden.

“See, it wasn't a lie, Satomi-san!! I told you, the enemy would really come!”

S-Stop it Yurika! If you say anymore we'll—

To Maki's surprise, Yurika easily revealed their identities. That would have caused not just Maki, but any magical girl, to despair.

“Good for you Yurika. Reuniting with an old classmate must feel great.”

“So that girl will be wearing an evil magical girl's outfit.”

“Treat her kindly, okay? There aren't that many people that would play along with your cosplay hobby.”

“Kurano-san, what kind of outfit would Maki-san wear?”

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

“Since Yurika is pink-ish, she would probably wear something dark. When the two line up together they would contrast nicely.”

Even now, the truth betrayed Maki's expectations. None of the girls showed any signs of catching onto Yurika's identity.

“W-What is…?”

Maki's jaw dropped at the completely unexpected development. Normally she kept herself composed, but this time, she couldn’t help but be thoroughly shaken. It was only natural after all; her identity had been exposed, she had expected that everything would be lost, but in reality it was the complete opposite. Yurika was announcing her presence as a magical girl, but the surroundings weren't affected whatsoever.

“Oh, she's pretty proper, but she's a cosplayer too…”

“So there are several types of cosplayers…”

“But wouldn't chic colors suit her better?”

“Maybe. She would look better if she matched the colors with her eyes.”

Eventually, the class began evaluating Maki out loud. Even then, they didn't touch on the fact that she was magical girl.

Cosplayer?

Instead, what they had mentioned was the term cosplayer. After straightening out her uniform, Maki looked over the class.

“No, you're wrong! Everyone, you're wrong!”

“Hey Yurika, is that girl going to join the cosplay society with you?”

As Yurika began trying to correct everyone, Koutarou called out to her with a carefree expression. That was not the expression of someone who was aware of the fighting between magical girls.

“She won't join! An intense fight is right around the corner!”

“I see. They do call Comiha a battlefield after all…”

Comiha was to be held for three days. It was a large scale event with over 300,000 participants. Because of that, it was incredibly crowded, and a lot of the participants likened the event to a battlefield. Koutarou was still on good terms with the cosplay society, and had heard all about it countless times.

“You're wrong! Wrooong!!”

“Cosplay…? Cosplayer…?”

Could it be that Nijino Yurika is recognized as a cosplayer in this class? And as her friend, I am too?

Maki began understanding the situation she had gotten involved in. In this class, Yurika was known as a cosplayer. And her acquaintance, Maki, was thought to be a cosplayer as well. Because of that, nobody believed Yurika when she called herself a magical girl. The same was true for Maki.

“She won't join! Maki-chan is not that kind of girl!”

“So, you're forcing her to cosplay with you even though she won't join the Cosclub?”

“No, I keep telling you, you're wrong!”

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

Tears started forming in the corners of Yurika's eyes as she desperately pleaded. This time, she was dead set on convincing Koutarou that she was a magical girl.

“Maki-san.”

Koutarou called out to Maki while she was lost in thought.

“Y-Yes!?”

She didn't expect that anyone would try talking to her, so her voice faltered. Her surprised expression was quite humorous.

“If Yurika causes you any problems, let me know right away.”

“You're wrong! If anyone's going to be causing problems, it's Maki-chan!”

“Yurika, even if you're old acquaintances, there are still things you can't say.”

“That's not it at all!!”

Leaving Yurika who was fiercely protesting, Koutarou looked at Maki with an apologetic expression.

“Sorry, Maki-san. We'll make sure to scold her.”

“Fueeeeeeh! Nobody is even trying to listen to me!!”

In the end, Yurika confessed her and Maki's identities, but nobody cared to listen to her.

“This is…”

Having looked on, Maki made a conclusion.

I see, that's how it is!

Realizing the situation, Maki grinded her teeth, mortified.

I thought she was just a stupid coward, but what an actor!

Because Yurika had announced herself as a cosplayer, she was able to cleverly hide the truth. That was what Maki had concluded. As a cosplayer, even if someone saw her after she had transformed, they would just assume it was cosplaying. On top of that, even if she told everyone the truth, there were no problems. They would just assume it was part of the background of her cosplay. Instead, she might even get others to help her. For example, if Yurika asked the surrounding people to 'find the evil magical girl,' they would help look for Maki and they wouldn't suspect a thing.

What a splendid tactic, Nijino Yurika… If don't reevaluate you, I might be the one who gets tripped up! To think you were hiding this kind of intelligence… Or maybe she has someone highly intelligent working with her!?

This perfect plan struck fear inside of Maki's heart. She could never have imagined that revealing the truth could have the opposite effect.

However, making a fool out of me was a big mistake, Nijino Yurika! I'll make you regret that, no matter what!

Maki began grinding her teeth even harder. She felt that Yurika was making fun of her. Maki's sense of rivalry flared up; she hadn't considered Yurika a rival up until now.

There was a reason for Maki to feel that way. If she was hiding her identity, there was no need for her to tell the class that she was a magical girl. However, Yurika had taken the initiative to tell them. The only reason for Yurika to tell them was so that it would torment Maki. Yurika had

used the one thing all magical girls had in common to toy with her. That's how Maki interpreted the situation.

Now that I know, I have no reason to let her toy with me!

Having understood the situation(?), Maki regained her composure and smiled.

“No, there's no need to worry. I actually wanted to start up cosplaying for real. If there's a cosclub, I would like to join.”

“Maki-chan!? W-What are you!?”

“Let's get along from now on, Yurika-san.”

You've gotten good at acting this half year, Nijino Yurika! However, I'll show you that acting is the only thing you've gotten better at soon enough!

Aika Maki, the indigo magical girl, Dark Navy. Despite her overwhelming magic power and intelligence, she had made a huge misunderstanding, and she was now more determined to defeat Yurika than ever before.

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

Part 3

As the calendar entered the later half of November, the wind blowing on the rooftop after school grew colder. Just being there deprived one of their warmth. However, Yurika who was standing there facing Maki, felt that Maki's stare was colder than the wind. On top of that, since only Yurika and Maki could be seen on the roof, it felt even colder.

“What did you want to talk about, Nijino Yurika?”

“Maki-chan, j-just what are you trying to do?”

Yurika had a lot of things she wanted to ask Maki. The reason for transferring to Kitsushouharukaze Highschool and why she said she was going to join the cosplay society. On top of that, she wanted to know what any of it had to do with room 106. Yurika had brought Maki onto the rooftop because she wanted to know the answers to these questions.

“Do you mean why I transferred to this school? Or something else?”

“Everything.”

Maki smiled confidently. However, despite her confident smile, she was carefully analyzing Yurika.

Just by looking at her, she doesn't seem to have changed during this half year… but I feel like something's off. And then there's the cosplaying… maybe I should investigate a bit more…?

“The reason for transferring to this school is obvious, don't you think? You are here, and the boy living in that room with all that magic power is going to this school as well. It's only obvious that I'd try to make contact.”

The biggest reason that Maki had transferred to Kitsushouharukaze High School was to secure access to room 106. It was easier for her to enter Koutarou's room as his classmate, rather than a stranger.

Another reason was Yurika. She wanted to investigate Yurika. The only information Maki had regarding Yurika was when she was just a normal middle schooler and the short amount of time after Yurika had replaced the previous magical girl. So she had next to no information regarding the magical girl, Rainbow Yurika.

“So why didn't you attack for over half a year?”

“You remember it as well don't you, that fight in March? At that time, your predecessor, Rainbow Nana’s desperate attack incapacitated five of our seven magical girls. It's taking time for us to recover. That's all.”

“Because of Nana-san's magic…”

Rainbow Nana was the magical girl with the Rainbow title before Yurika. Eight months ago, Nana focused all of her power into a single attack against the evil magical girls went on an all-out attack. That magic had incapacitated several of the evil magical girls but in return, Nana was unable to continue fighting. Therefore Nana handed down her duty and powers to Yurika, and Yurika became the magical girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika.

“Well, it was a big blow for both us at Darkness Rainbow and your Rainbow Heart.”

Rainbow Heart and Darkness Rainbow. Those were the names of the battle groups the two of them were in. Rainbow Heart was the name of the magical country's army. Because of that, everyone in it was a magic user. The centerpiece of that army were seven magical girls, the strongest magic users that had been given the rainbow title.

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

Rainbow Nana was one of those seven girls. Rainbow Heart worked for peace and the proper use of magic. Simply put, they would fight demons or capture people who used magic for selfish reasons. Darkness Rainbow was a secret society that was active behind the scenes of the magical country. And all of its members were also magic users. In total, there were seven powerful magical girls in it too. However, unlike Rainbow Heart that mastered all types of magic, the girls of Darkness Rainbow focused only on a single type. Although it could get in the way of their mission, it was all because of Darkness Rainbow's goal: to use magic as they please and create a future for themselves using that power. Because of that, they didn't research any magic they didn't need. Doing that would naturally allow them stand as equals with Rainbow Heart.

“No, I guess your side might have suffered more. You lost Rainbow Nana, who could fend off all seven of us. And her replacement is a complete failure.”

“That's not true! I'm a worthy replacement for Nana-san!”

“That might be the case. At the very least you have far surpassed your predecessor in terms of craftiness.”

As she said that, Maki narrowed her eyes. Unlike what she had said, she didn't think of Yurika as a failure.

“Craftiness?”

However, Yurika didn't know what Maki was talking about. Looking at Yurika, Maki smiled. It was a cold-hearted smile that sent chills down Yurika's spine.

“To think you'd call yourself a cosplayer to hide your identity.”

“Eh?”

However, the words that left Maki's mouth made Yurika forget about the chills.

“I take my hat off to you. With that method, even if your secret was revealed, nobody would believe it. Honestly I’m amazed.”

Maki wasn't joking or complimenting her. When the two reunited during home room, she felt more dead than alive.

“Y-You're wrong! T-That's not what I'm trying to do!”

“Don't try to hide it! There's no other reason for you to be in the cosplay society!!”

Maki had completely misunderstood the situation. She believed Yurika had joined the cosplay society of her own accord. The thought that Koutarou hadn't believed her from the start, or that she had forcibly been recruited into the cosplay society didn't even occur to her.

“I've never even called myself a cosplayer—”

“… I see. Through that thorough acting, you've built up an absolute defense. Even if you transformed in school, nobody would doubt you. Moreover, by mobilizing the students, you can make up for your lack of ability. You've thought this through.”

To Maki, Yurika had turned Kitsushouharukaze High school into an impregnable fortress. She had obtained the ability to hide her identity, and at the same time, to make up for her lack of abilities when compared to Nana, as she could use the students of the school. For example, if she used her magic to enhance the abilities of club members from a martial arts club, they would turn into frighteningly powerful battle machines.

It's a truly terrifying plan… it's a good thing I caught on to it so early…

Maki had caught on to Yurika's plan(?) because she had been made fun of. If she hadn't heard about Yurika's cosplaying before, she would have fallen straight into her trap.

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

“That's not what I'm—”

Yurika was frantically trying to solve the misunderstanding; if she didn't, the situation would just get worse.

“But it won't go that easily.”

“I keep telling you that you're wrong! Please Maki-chan, just listen to what I have to say!!”

“I'm also joining the cosclub. By doing that, we'll be standing on equal ground again.”

However, Maki had seen a fatal flaw in Yurika's seemingly perfect plan(?). That was if Maki also joined the cosplay society, Yurika's various privileges would apply to her too.

“You’ve miscalculated, Rainbow Yurika! Trying to make a fool of me and revealing that you were in the cosclub was a mistake!!”

Maki lost her cool and the fervor she kept hidden deep inside surfaced. She glared at Yurika with fire burning in her eyes.

“That's wrong, Maki-chan! It's a misunderstanding! I wasn't making fun of you! And I'm not the one who brought up the cosclub!”

Yurika never had any plans like what Maki thought. She had never even called herself a cosplayer, nor did she join the cosplay society of her own accord. The people around her just didn't believe her. She also had no recollection of making fun of Maki.

She was only happy that since Maki had appeared, she now had proof of her identity.

“Shut up, Yurika! I won't be fooled anymore!”

“Aaaaaahhhh! Not even Maki-chan believes in me! Why does it always turn out like this!?”

Yurika was at her wits end and started crying.

She's just like Satomi-san!

It was only natural for Maki not to believe Yurika's situation. No matter how you looked at it, Yurika could only have ended up in her current situation on purpose. Since Koutarou and Sanae refused to believe in magic from the moment they met Yurika, her situation had grown worse and worse. But nobody would have believed that.

“But it's not over because a single plan has failed, right, Nijino Yurika!?”

“It's over! I don't have a single plan!”

“That's true. No idiot would just reveal their plans. But there's one thing that's bothering me.”

Maki regained her composure. Aika Maki was normally composed on the outside but she hid an incredible fervor inside.”

“You're probably bothered about something completely unrelated to what I'm talking about. Right!?”

Tears streamed out of Yurika's eyes.

“Did you think of this plan? Or was it someone else?”

That was important information for Maki. If there was someone making plans for Yurika, she might get tripped up if she expected a normal battle between magical girls.

“I didn't think of any plan!”

But to Yurika that was completely useless information. A plan didn't exist to begin with, so there was no one that had thought up of a plan. Yurika desperately wanted Maki to know that.

Yurika's Enemy Appears!

“I see… so you really do have an intelligent accomplice with you…”

“There's no one like that! Nobody has been thinking up plans!!”

“Fufufu, don't worry, Yurika. I won't tell you to reveal that accomplice's identity. That's for me to find out myself!”

So that's my real opponent… if possible I'd like to flush that person out before I fight it out with Yurika…

Eventually Maki began feeling a sense of rivalry towards someone she had never met. However, Maki didn't know. That person didn't exist to begin with.

“That's all… I give up… you don't need to listen to what I have to say…”

Yurika finally gave up on trying to persuade Maki. According to her own experience, once it had gotten this bad, it was impossible to resolve the misunderstanding.

“That's true. Our talk ends here.”

At the same time Maki finished talking, the doors that led inside the school opened. Maki had noticed that someone was approaching the rooftop.

“Ah, so this is where you were, Nijino-san!”

A lone schoolgirl appeared from behind the doors.

“Sakuraba-senpai!?”

Harumi had appeared on the rooftop. Once she spotted Yurika, she smiled and waved as she ran towards her. A small smile appeared on Maki's lips after she snuck a peek at Harumi.

“Remember this, Yurika. Darkness Rainbow is coming to claim the magic power concentrated in that room.”

“Maki-chan!?”

Maki turned her back on Yurika and began to leave. Since Harumi had appeared, she had decided that they would be unable to continue talking.

“However, you're at a disadvantage in this match since you have so much to protect. Will you be able to protect it all I wonder?”

“Wait, Maki-chan!”

“Fufufu.”

Ignoring Yurika's calls, Maki continued walking. She passed by Harumi and vanished into the school.

“Hah, Ahh, Hah… S-Sorry, Nijino-san. Hah… D-Did I… hah… interrupt you, and your friend?”

“No, you didn't…”

Yurika was thinking about Maki as she shook her head towards Harumi who was out of breath. Thinking about what's to come, her expression naturally grew darker. But she wasn't thinking about her upcoming battle with Maki.

How can I explain it to Maki-chan in a way that she would understand…?

The utmost interest for Yurika was how she could properly explain this complex situation to Maki.

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

Part 1

Tuesday, November 17

“…Maki-chan, huh…”

After parting ways with Harumi who wanted to talk about the date, Yurika's expression turned dark once again as she walked home. Her steps were heavy and she had a gloomy atmosphere around her. Finally alone, the situation she was in finally began sinking in. She had forgotten as she stubbornly tried to resolve the misunderstanding, but now that Maki had appeared, she had to fight.

“Fighting… can I even do it…?”

Ever since she came to room 106, no, ever since she had become a magical girl, Yurika had never experienced a real battle. When she had just become a magical girl, she used her cane and magic she was still unaccustomed to, to run away from anyone chasing after her.

An enemy that used magic hadn't appeared ever since she arrived at room 106, nor had she had an encounter worth calling a battle. At most she had just used her magic when accidents had occurred. Frankly put, while Yurika may have had strong magic, she was still a beginner when it came to fighting.

“But I have to do it! I owe Nana-san for saving my life!”

Yurika raised her head as she made up her mind. She strongly wished to repay her savior. That strong wish suppressed her urge to run away.

“Yurika Fight! Yurika Fight!”

Yurika closed her hand to make a fist, and pumped herself while putting her fist up in the air.

“Alright!”

When Yurika slapped her cheeks with both hands, her expression completely changed and she began taking strong, willful steps.

“I'll do it! It's a magical girl's duty to protect room 106!”

Yurika's enemy had finally appeared, fighting with her was not only her duty, but her way of repaying her savior. She also held a faint hope that Koutarou and the others would finally believe that she could use magic. She was overflowing with willpower.

“…Huh?”

As Yurika got close to Corona House, she heard something.

“Third up! Matsudaira Kenji! I'll be singing! The song is 'Brightness Edge!'”

“As expected from Matsudaira-kun. You know the songs on the top of the charts.”

“Mackenzie! As expected from the man who's faced a knife!”

“Shut it, Kou! Damn, I chose the wrong song.”

What Yurika heard were familiar and loud voices.

“What's going on?”

Kenji, Shizuka and Koutarou were speaking into microphones. On top of that, she could hear the voices of several other people. The closer Yurika got to Corona House, the louder it got.

I wonder if everyone from the class came to room 106?

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

Based on the number of voices, a considerable amount of people seemed to be there. It was almost as if they were holding a party.

“Wha!? Could they be holding a party without me!? T-That's just unfair!!”

Holding a parting meant there was free food to be had. Thinking of that, Yurika dashed towards room 106.

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

Part 2

Lured in by the hopes of food, Yurika slammed open the door to room 106. As she entered, the voices from inside reached her ears.

“Sixth up! Satomi Koutarou, I'll be knitting!”

“Beat it, Satomi! What kind of boring skill is that!?”

“Wah, that's unexpected! Satomi-kun, you're actually knitting. Amazing!”

“Hmph, that's because I have a good teacher.”

“There's no reason for you to act so cool about it…”

Just as Yurika had imagined, a party was being held in room 106. The room was small enough as it was, but with this many classmates, there was almost no space left to move in. There was also a lot of food, snacks and drinks prepared. It was exactly what Yurika had predicted.

“Oooh, that looks delicious…”

“Hm, you're finally here, Yurika.”

Koutarou noticed that Yurika had entered the room and called out to her. However, Yurika was already reaching out towards the nearby fried chicken.

“Chomp, Munch, I'm vhack.”

“Don't speak and eat at the same time.”

Yurika greeted Koutarou as she stuffed her mouth full of chicken.

“This chicken ish delishous.”

“That's not for you, don't go eating all of it.”

“Huh?”

Hearing Sanae's voice, Yurika looked away from the chicken she was stuffing herself with. As she did, she could see Sanae floating from Koutarou towards herself. There were a lot of people in the way, but that didn't matter to Sanae.

“This many people aren't going to gather for no reason. Look over there.”

Sanae stopped in front of Yurika and pointed towards the wall furthest into room 106. On the wall hung a large banner with the words: 'Welcome Aika Maki-san! Class 1-A's welcoming party in Satomi's room.'

“Oh, Yurika-san came as well?”

“Wha!?”

Maki stood right below the banner. She was surrounded by several classmates as she called out to Yurika while smiling.

“M-Maki-chan!?”

“You're quite late, did you have some business to attend to?”

Maki saw Harumi as she parted ways with Yurika, so she knew exactly what Yurika was doing. Despite knowing that, she laughed as she said so.

In reality, Maki was provoking Yurika. What she wasn't saying out loud was 'While you were out playing, I got this far.'

“W-Why!? Why is Maki-chan here!?”

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

Yurika was horribly upset.

The chicken in her mouth dropped to the tea table. Even though she might be carefree, Yurika knew just what it meant for Maki to be here. In this situation, it might be hard to do any serious investigating, but if it was just a pre-examination there were no problems.

“It's only normal to hold a welcoming party for a transfer student.”

“A proper welcoming, good, good. Koutarou, you've picked up on a noble's attitude.”

“Being a noble or a commoner has nothing to do with this.”

“Hohoho, there's no need to be embarrassed.”

There was no need to finish the investigation today. If she got closer to Koutarou, she would have countless chances.

I let my guard down! This is what she meant when she said it was easy to get in!

Of course, that wasn't Maki's only goal. She was also trying to gather info on Koutarou and the residents of room 106. From this one welcoming party, Maki could get plenty of information she needed to properly invade this room. Maki moved more accurately and swiftly than Yurika had expected.

“Yurika-chan, I left your favorite for you, just ask Ruth-san for it later.”

“Not good, at this rate something terrible will happen!”

“Yurika-sama?”

Neither Shizuka's nor Ruth's words reached Yurika's ears as she began to panic. The longer she let Maki stay in room 106, the worse the situation would get. She needed to get Maki out of the room as quickly as possible.

“S-Satomi-san, that's right, to Satomi-san!”

Yurika looked around for Koutarou who was the one who had organized this party and prepared the location. The fastest way to chase Maki out of the room was to get Koutarou's help. Although he still refused to believe in magic, he was the only one Yurika could rely on.

“Hey, Furuta! Don't strip!”

“But Satomi. If I don't strip I can't dance naked.”

“That's not what I meant! Are you planning on dancing in this small room with this many people and push your dirty thing onto others!?”

Koutarou was in the middle of arguing with a classmate who had begun stripping.

“Satomi-san, Satomi-san!”

Because of that, he didn't notice that Yurika was calling for him. Without any other choice, Yurika moved through the crowd of classmates and headed towards Koutarou.

“That's rude, it's not dirty! I took a bath just a while ago! It's only common sense to fix yourself up before getting up on the stage!”

“I said that's not what I meant!!”

“Satomi-san, please, listen to what I have to say!”

Having gotten closer, Yurika shook Koutarou's arm, and he finally turned his attention to Yurika.

“Hm? What's wrong, Yurika?”

“Satomi-san, at this rate room 106 will be stolen away from you!”

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

“Stolen?”

At this point, Koutarou's relationship with the invaders wasn't all that bad. Koutarou had begun understanding that they all had proper reasons for trying to take the room and that they weren't completely evil either. To rephrase it, they had built up a sense of trust between one another. Because of that, Koutarou didn't really feel any immediate sense of danger, being told that room 106 would be stolen away.

“Who would be stealing it? …Well, it is true that you've lost points and you're now down to roughly 70 points.”

Koutarou whispered the second half of what he said to Yurika. Yurika who was bad at games had lost a lot of points, and her tatami points had now dropped down below 80. From a different point of view, Yurika was about to have the room stolen from her.

“Y-You're wrong! I'm not talking about us! A new invader has appeared!”

“A new invader!?”

Hearing that, Koutarou stopped moving.

“That's right! Maki-chan is after the magic power gathered in this room!”

“You're saying that Maki-san is after this room?”

“That's right, so you need to chase her out of this room as soon as possible or something terrible will happen!”

“What are you saying—”

Koutarou was about to tell her to stop saying stupid things. But before he could, he noticed the serious expression Yurika had. Seeing her desperate expression, he swallowed his words, and decided to at least listen to what she had to say.

“Hey, Yurika, explain it properly. Don't suddenly call Maki-san a—”

“Chance!”

Seeing Koutarou not paying attention to his surroundings, his classmate began stripping. He was planning on dancing naked. Naturally, the girls in the room began screaming.

“Eight! Furuta! I will be dancing!”

“Kyaaaa!”

“Idiot! Pervert!!”

“Woah, stop it, Furuta! Don't strip!”

“Satomi-san, I'm still not done talking!”

“S-Sorry Yurika, w-wait a minute. Stop it, Furuta, don't go any further! There are lots of girls in here too!”

Koutarou was busy trying to keep his classmate from getting naked and didn't have the time to listen to Yurika.

“Did something happen?”

“What's wrong, Yurika, why are you shouting like that?”

“We will listen to you, don’t mind Koutarou.”

Shizuka, Sanae and Theia approached Yurika as to replace the busy Koutarou.

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

The others were focusing on the naked dance, but the three girls who were often with Koutarou weren't really affected by a boy in his underwear.

“A-Actually, Maki-chan is an evil magical girl that's after the magic power in this room!”

“Now that I think about it, you said the same thing when you first came to this room.”

Sanae floated in the air and crossed her arms, and recalled the first time they had met. Yurika had appeared in the room by smashing through the window. She said the same thing that day as she was doing now.

“Yes! So you can’t hold a welcoming party for her! Getting into the room like this is just what she wants!”

Yurika tried her best to explain to the three. There was no time to spare. If they didn't do something about Maki right away, who knew what could happen.

But that won't work, Nijino Yurika.

Maki looked at Yurika with a freezing cold glare, but she still had a fake smile on her face.

That's because I'm using the same method you are to protect myself!

She was convinced that all of Yurika's efforts would be in vain.

“I see, so that's the setting[1] you have going on.”

Sanae, who had been in deep thought, clapped her hands and smiled. Sanae was impressed by Yurika's ability to create and stick to a story.

“Eh!?”

“Cosplay is the only thing you're thorough with, isn't it?”

Sanae nodded repeatedly to Yurika who was confused. She was surprisingly praising Yurika.

“Wait a minute, you're wrong, Sanae-chan!”

“I understand, Yurika-chan. How impressive it must be to have prepared for over half a year…”

Next to Sanae was Shizuka, who was also nodding. She was very impressed that Yurika had seen through Maki's transfer over half a year ago, and had been hyping up for the winter Comiha.

“You're wrong, both of you! Theia-chan, please say something to Sanae-chan and Shizuka-san!”

Yurika began panicking as both Sanae and Shizuka completely misunderstood her. She decided that she alone couldn't solve this misunderstanding, and turned towards Theia.

“I got it, I got it. You want to keep it at that, right?”

However, fate was harsh. Her remaining life line snapped in an instant.

“T-Theia-chan!?”

“But, Yurika. We can't just chase her out of her own welcome party because of your setting.”

“Yeah. Just overlook it for today. People will take offense, you know?”

“That's true. I understand that you're panicking because Comiha is close, but can't you at least be honest and celebrate your reunion for today?”

“Cruel, the three of you are too cruel…”

Yurika's eyes began tearing up.

[1] The background used in the context of cosplay

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

“It's not a lie, if we really don't chase out Maki-chan, something terrible will happen!!”

“Even if you say that, she did just transfer in…”

“Yurika, just hold it in for a while. Okay?”

“It won't hurt to forget about cosplaying for a while.”

It didn't matter how hard she struggled. Even though the evil magical girl had finally appeared, nobody recognized her as an enemy. It was a shocking event that just might ruin her standing as a magical girl.

“Fufufu…”

Seeing tears stream down Yurika's cheeks, Maki gloated.

Serves you right, Yurika. That's your punishment for making a fool of me…

She wasn't Yurika's enemy, but a fellow cosplayer. That slight difference in recognition gave Maki an overwhelming advantage.

Her classmates, unaware of the truth, treated her as a cosplayer and held a welcoming party for her. And since Koutarou lived on his own, room 106 had been chosen as the party location so that family members wouldn't get in the way.

Since they recognized both Yurika and Maki as cosplayers, they interpreted Yurika's urge to drive Maki out as being plain mean.

Though Yurika wasn't aware of it, the reason she hadn't been identified as the immature magical girl that she was was because everyone was convinced that she was a cosplayer. If that wasn't the case, she probably would have been found out long ago. And right now, Maki could say the same. She was protected from the world by the word 'cosplay.'

“Why won't you believe me!? I've never told a lie, not even once!!”

With tears overflowing from her eyes, Yurika turned her back towards Theia and the others.

“Ah!?”

“Yurika-chan, where are you going!?”

“Yurika, the welcoming party isn't over yet!”

This is just too cruel!

Someday they would believe her. Once the enemy appeared, they would surely understand. Up until this point, Yurika had believed that would be the case. However, heartlessly enough, the reality was different. The tears Yurika was shedding this time were different, she was crying for real.

“I don't care anymore! Even if you're in trouble later, I won't come to save you!”

“—Yurika?”

Hearing Yurika's sorrowful voice, Koutarou stopped what he was doing and looked behind him. However at that point Yurika had already left the room.

“Ruth-san, what happened with Yurika?”

Not understanding what was going on, Koutarou asked Ruth about the situation. Ruth shook her lightly head and began explaining.

“I don't really understand. Everyone was telling her to go easy on the cosplaying like always, but she suddenly dashed out of the room…”

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

Answering Koutarou, Ruth looked worriedly towards the door Yurika had left from. Koutarou did the same.

I wonder if it's okay to just leave her be…?

Feeling that something was different with Yurika, Koutarou hesitated whether or not he should follow after her.

“Got it!!”

“Woah!? You stupid Kou! Don't let go of Furuta!!”

“S-Sorry!”

“Kyaaaaaa!!”

“Noooooooo!!”

But because of the commotion in room 106, Koutarou was stuck, unable to chase after Yurika.

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

Part 3

Harumi and Kiriha met outside the front gate of the hospital.

“Oh? You are Satomi-kun's friend… I think it was… Kurano-san?”

“Yes, my name is Kurano Kiriha. Hello, Sakuraba-senpai.”

“Hello, Kurano-san.”

Having finished her medical examination, Harumi came out from the hospital at the same time Kiriha came out from a different ward. The two of them didn't notice each other until they reached the front gates.

“Were you in for an examination, Sakuraba-senpai?”

Kiriha hid her true colors from anyone but the other invaders and Koutarou. This time was no different and she greeted Harumi as a proper junior.

“Ah, yes, that's right. It's my usual routine checkup.”

Harumi smiled, but only for a moment. It vanished as she looked towards the hospital building.

“Uhm… could it be that you're sick too, Kurano-san?”

The reason her smiled had vanished was because she was worried that something might be wrong with Kiriha.

“No.”

However, Kiriha shook her head. Hearing her answer, Harumi's expression brightened up.

“Actually, an acquaintance of mine is hospitalized here.”

“I see…”

Harumi had been relieved to hear that Kiriha wasn't sick, but now she began worrying about Kiriha's acquaintance instead.

“Fufufu, Sakuraba-senpai, it's just a few bruises from a traffic accident, there's no need to worry that much.”

“Ah, s-sorry…”

Harumi's cheeks turned red with embarrassment, but hearing that there hadn't been any serious injuries, a smile returned to her face.

“You're quite kind, Sakuraba-senpai.”

“T-That's not… I have experience with being hospitalized too, so I was just a bit anxious…”

Kiriha was smiling and Harumi was blushing. Looking at the two, it was hard to tell who the senior was.

Several cars passed by Harumi and Kiriha as they walked together on the sidewalk.

“Do you get along well with Satomi-kun, Kurano-san?”

“Yes, we do get along, but you could say that we also fight a lot.”

The two of them continued chatting as they walked. Because of the heavy traffic, they naturally began to speak in a louder voice. Since they didn't have that much in common, the topic eventually became about Koutarou.

“Hearing that makes me envious.”

“Envious, you say?”

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

“Yes. I have never had a fight with Satomi-kun.”

She wore a sad expression on her face as she said that. Kiriha was amazed at her answer.

“Really? It's been quite a while since Satomi-kun joined the knitting society, so I figured you would have at least quarreled once or twice.”

“That's just it, we haven't at all. Satomi-kun respects and treasures me, that's it. He's never shown me any strong emotions…”

“I see… to think that Satomi-kun would…”

So Koutarou is treasuring the person he loves too much… Unexpectedly, we might get along better with Koutarou… No, is he just trying to keep Sakuraba Harumi out of our fight?

The other day, Koutarou had said that Harumi was his type. But he hadn't even shown his true colors to her. The way he treated her was clearly different from how he treated the invaders and Kenji. Kiriha figured that it was to keep her out of the fight for room 106.

“Would you like to have a fight with Koutarou-kun, Sakuraba-senpai?”

“I don't mean that I want to fight, but I want him to hold back less.”

“I understand how you feel. I wouldn't want the man I love to hold back either.”

And Sakuraba Harumi isn't satisfied with the current situation. It's becoming quite the complex case, Satomi Koutarou…

“L-Love!? T-That's… I don't really…:!”

“It's okay, Sakuraba Senpai. I won't tell a soul.”

“Ah, auuu… U-Uhm…”

“You do love him, right?”

“Y-Yes…”

Before long, Harumi began nodding slowly as if she had given up. Her face was now beet red.

“I knew it. I thought that might be the case ever since I saw your acting on top of the stage.”

“Ah…”

As Kiriha mentioned the stage, Harumi's face turned even redder, and she was unable to say a thing. When Harumi turned her eyes away in panic, she saw someone she knew.

“…Is that, Nijino-san?”

“Eh?”

Harumi instinctively stopped moving, and Kiriha followed suit. Kiriha looked around, trying to find Yurika, but she couldn't find her right away.

“Fufu, look, over there.”

Seeing that, Harumi smiled slightly as she pointed towards Yurika.

“Ah, you're right. But they're holding a welcoming party for the transfer student, so why is she over there…?”

It was a small park. And in the corner of the playing ground, was a familiar twin tail shaking.

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

Part 4

In the park, lit up by the dusk, the sound of a swing could be heard. Since the sun was about to set, there were no children playing there. As the temperature dropped with the coming winter, the only reason someone would be here was if either they really loved playing, or they had a special reason.

“Hmph. I don't care anymore… I hope you all suffer by Maki-chan's hands later.”

Yurika was the latter. She was the one riding on the swing.

“I definitely won't come to save you! Not Theia-chan, Sanae-chan, Shizuka-san or Satomi-san! …Satomi-san was a bit different this time but… he never believed me so I won't save him either!”

As Yurika moved the swing, she shed tears of frustration. Rather than having been outdone by Maki, she was more shocked that those close to her hadn't believed her. Since they had been together for over half a year, Yurika wanted them to at least believe her when she said that Maki was dangerous.

“They're all so impolite.”

As a result, Yurika abandoned her duty. Fleeing from the room in that situation was the same as giving up your duty as a magical girl. Normally, Yurika should have stayed and kept an eye out on Maki. If she tried to use magic to investigate, Yurika would have gotten in the way of her trying to gather more information. Doing that while keeping her surroundings from realizing that she was a magical girl was her duty.

However, Yurika couldn't do it. A large reason for that was that the people of room 106, the people she had begun to trust, didn’t believe her.

For what reason was she fighting? Before she knew it, her previous enemies had become her reason to fight, and when those people denied her, it caused her to give up. When Yurika had first come to room 106 she probably wouldn't have cared. But right now, Yurika just couldn't stand it. She was so mortified, she couldn't stop her tears.

“Nijino-san, Nijino-san.”

That's why Yurika only noticed Harumi after she called out to her several times.

“Nijino-san, what happened?”

“Eh!? S-Sakuraba-senpai!?”

Since Yurika hadn't been paying any attention to her surroundings, she was very surprised by Harumi's appearance.

“Kyaaa!?”

“Nijino-san!”

She was so surprised she almost fell off the swing, but she desperately held on by grabbing onto the chain.

“Are you okay, Nijino-san!?”

“I-I'm fine, You just scared me a bit.”

Yurika held onto the chain while catching her breath. Because she was so surprised, she forgot about her tears.

“I see, that's good…”

“Sakuraba-senpai, why are you here?”

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“Fufufu, that's because this is right next to the hospital.”

After letting out a sigh of relief after hearing that Yurika was okay, Harumi then revealed a big smile because of Yurika's question.

“Ah, t-that's right…”

Hearing that, Yurika finally realized she was in the park right next to the hospital. She couldn't remember much after she ran out from room 106. Being driven by her strong emotions, she ran about at random, and finally reached this park. Having asked about something so obvious, Yurika began blushing.

“So, what happened, Yurika-san?”

“Even Kiriha-san is…”

When Kiriha appeared from behind Harumi, Yurika was surprised once more. On top of never having imagined seeing Harumi and Kiriha together, she also didn't know why Kiriha was here to begin with.

“Actually… that's… my friends and I… couldn't see eye to eye about something… no matter how many times I told them the truth, they wouldn't believe me… so I…”

As she spoke, she remembered her feeling of sadness and frustration, and the tears that had stopped began pouring out once more.

“So that's what happened…”

After listening to Yurika, Harumi revealed a sad expression. She sympathized with Yurika, almost as if she was the one who had been hurt.

“…”

It seems something happened at the welcoming party… It looks like I should leave this to Sakuraba-senpai…

Getting a grip on the circumstances, Kiriha chose not to say anything. Since she didn't believe in magic either, she knew that if she began speaking it would get unnecessarily complicated.

“So that's why you're crying in this place.”

“…Yes…”

Yurika nodded her head and looked down. Her feelings had been greatly hurt.

“I see…”

“…”

Harumi looked gently at Yurika. Since Yurika was helping her with Koutarou, she now wanted to return the favor.

“Can I ask you a question?”

“…Yes…”

Still looking down on the ground, Yurika replied in with a whisper.

“What made you sad, Nijino-san? That the truth didn't reach a lot of friends? Or that your special friends didn't believe you?”

Was she sad because a lot of friends didn't accept the truth as fact? Or did the truth not matter and she was sad by the fact that her close friends didn't believe her? If she didn't make that clear, Harumi wouldn't be able to comfort Yurika.

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“That's…”

Yurika held back an answer. Normally, the answer would be the first option. Those that hadn't believed her were complete strangers. And amongst them were her supposed enemies. But despite that, Yurika was sad because that handful of people hadn't believed her. Even though, since they were enemies, it was only natural for them not to.

“It's… my special friends not believing me that’s more painful…”

Yurika's answer confused herself. She considered her supposed enemies as close friends.

I see, so that's why I'm always so frustrated and mortified…

At first she just wanted to let Koutarou and the others escape from the unsuspected danger. But as she spent more time with them, a desire for them to believe her began growing. That was because she had begun feeling goodwill towards them. Which was why today, when faced with a real crisis, having them not believe her was unbelievably sad.

“So that's how it is. In that case, you already have your answer, Nijino-san.”

Hearing Yurika's response, Harumi nodded.

“…Eh?”

Confused by Harumi's words, Yurika looked up from the ground, and she saw Harumi looking at her with a gentle expression.

“Nijino-san, you still think of them as precious to you. That's why you're so sad. That's why you just need to make them believe you. Right?”

Because she thought of them as friends, she was sad that they hadn't believed her. Her options were to either stop being friends with them, or to convince them that she was telling the truth. Any other method would just leave Yurika with feelings of regret.

“Yes, that's true… but how can I…”

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“Take action. I don't know what you want them to believe in, Nijino-san, but you need to keep doing what you want them to believe in.”

“Keep doing what I want them to believe in…”

In Yurika's case that was to continue her duty as a magical girl. If Maki was targeting room 106, her duty was to protect it.

“You can only earn trust through action. If you try to convince them with words, trick them or fool them, you won't earn the trust you desire, Nijino-san.”

“I see, over…”

It was at that point that Yurika finally noticed.

Over this past half year, did I ever properly act like a magical girl? Even though I explained it with words, I never truly behaved like one…

And today, her enemy by the name of Maki finally appeared. Wasn't this finally the chance to earn Koutarou and the other's trust that she had waited for?

“Alright!”

Yurika slapped her cheeks with all her strength. When she did, the tears that had gathered around her eyes scattered all over, and the tears sparkled under the setting sun.

“I understand, Sakuraba-senpai! I'll do my best!!”

By the time the tears had sunk into the ground, an indomitable spirit and a smile could be seen on her face.

“Give it your all, Nijino-san.”

“Yes, sorry for making you worry, Sakuraba-senpai!! This unworthy Nijino Yurika will give it her all!!”

Yurika saluted Harumi in a comical fashion. It was like her sad expression from just a moment ago was a mere dream.

“So this is Sakuraba Harumi…”

Kiriha who had silently been watching over Harumi and Yurika let out words of praise.

So this is why Satomi Koutarou doesn't see her as a romantic interest…

Seeing Harumi's thoughtfulness, gentleness and her normally hidden strong will in person, Kiriha could clearly sense that Sakuraba Harumi would eventually become a powerful rival.

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

Part 5

Maki's welcoming party ended after the clock had passed eight o'clock. Continuing the party after eight would trouble the neighbors, so the landlord, Shizuka, put an end to it. That said, since the party had begun just before four o'clock, the participants had been able to enjoy themselves to their fullest.

“In the end, Yurika didn't come back…”

Having returned to her own home, Maki muttered to herself. Her words echoed through her empty room. It was a dark, lonely room with barely any furniture.

“That magic barrier that appeared at six was most likely hers. She acted like she got into a fight and started getting in my way from the outside… She really must have someone intelligent on her side. How irritating…”

Maki faced the center of the room and reached out her hand.

“Come, Twilight Wing!”

Along with her words, a cane appeared in her hand. Her cane, just like Yurika's, had plenty of decorations, and didn't look like it was designed for practical use. The biggest difference between their canes was the color. Unlike Yurika's fantasy inspiring pink colored cane, Maki's cane had a more desolate, indigo colored hue.

“Magic Communication Gem, activate. Open channel.”

Maki raised the cane above her head and muttered something. It was the spell required to activate a magical tool she had set up.

Responding to Maki's incantation, the indigo jewel buried into the ceiling began glowing. Almost as if resonating, six jewels buried into the walls surrounding Maki began glowing as well. The colors of the jewels were red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. Adding in Maki's indigo, it was all seven colors of the rainbow. However, the light being emitted was somehow dark. It was almost as if they weren't emitting light, but darkness. As time passed on, the light being emitted by the six jewels gradually began forming the shapes of people.

“Oh, that student uniform suits you, Maki.”

As the discharged light stabilized, next to each of the jewels were girls wearing the same colored outfit as their gem.

All six of the girls were holograms. The jewel Maki was using was a magic tool that allowed her to talk to people far away in holographic form.

“Don't make fun of me. You told me to report, so I went through all the trouble to contact you.”

“My bad, don't be so upset.”

The girl in red dropped her shoulders as Maki responded.

“Really now, you really are…”

Despite being surrounded by six girls, Maki showed no signs of flinching. Maki and the other six girls were all on even ground. These girls were her allies. These seven girls, including Maki, made up the officers of Yurika's enemy, Darkness Rainbow.

“So, how was it? The new rainbow and that magic concentration?”

Seeing that Maki and the girl in red had finished talking, the girl in violet opened her mouth. Out of the seven, she was the most mature, and most often held the role of the chairman.

“First of all, regarding Rainbow Yurika, I'm not sure.”

“By that you mean?”

“Her abilities aren't all that bad but, it seems like she has someone highly intelligent working with her.”

Maki began her explanation. She talked about how Yurika could manipulate the information through the use of cosplay, and how she got in the way of Maki's investigation of room 106 from the outside.

“So I can't see the full extent of it all. All I know is that she is inferior to her predecessor, Rainbow Nana.”

“That sure is a handful.”

“If we were to fight, who knows what kind of interruption would get in the way…”

“Maki, it could be that the accomplice is more troublesome. In the end, magic is just power. Depending on the usage, its effect could increase by a large factor.

“I think so too.”

The girl in violet agreed with Maki. The two of them nodded to one another with serious expressions on their faces.

“You should just crush that coward right away.”

The girl in red let out a displeased voice. She was simple and straightforward, so this discussion was irritating her.

“It's not that simple. Right now Yurika's mental state is perfectly stable. She's completely different from eight months ago.”

Eight months ago, after she had just succeeded Rainbow Nana's duty and power, the pressure from her duty and the constantly appearing enemies were almost enough to crush her. Because of that, she ran around and used her magic without thinking of the consequences. But now, Yurika was different. It was true that she was still a coward, but she wasn't as frightened as she was back then.

“That might be the influence of that accomplice.”

“That's very possible. The existence of an ally she can trust in must have stabilized her mental state.”

Maki and the girl in violet nodded to each other once more. But Maki was somewhat irritated.

To think she would trust in others, she really is a fool. People will betray you as soon as they get the chance. The only thing you can believe in is power. Power that completely overwhelms others!

Maki was irritated that Yurika had found allies she could trust and that those allies in turn allowed her mental state to stabilize.

“And there’s also the possibility that they have another plan ready. It's dangerous to rely on force.”

“Geez, what a pain…”

The girl in red frowned and scratched her head.

“That's enough about Rainbow. So, how about that concentration of magic power?”

The next one to speak was the girl in orange. She had short hair and big eyes that gave off an energetic impression.

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

“I got up close and gave it a rough examination.”

“As expected from Navy-chan, you get things done fast.”

Not liking being called 'Navy-chan' by the girl in orange, Maki furrowed her brows slightly.

“…The magic power in that room is massive. Magic power that could normally only be found in artifact-rank magic items is being concentrated in that place.”

Out of all magical items, artifacts were said to hold the power of legends.

They had unfathomable powers, but the method of producing them had been lost, and it was next to impossible to create them nowadays. The only methods of production that remained were not realistic due to the time required. Because of that, artifacts were the ultimate magic items said to have been created by God.

“Wow, that much!?”

The girl in orange's surprise was somewhat exaggerated, but Maki ignored her and continued talking.

“If we can control it completely, we'll get the upper hand on Rainbow Heart. Even more, we might even be able to upset the power balance in Folsaria.”

“Then we can't just leave it be!”

The girl in orange's hair shook and her eyes sparkled. The girls in Darkness Rainbow were trying to overthrow the magical country, Folsaria, for their own reasons. Because of that, they were always on the lookout for powerful artifacts or something with equal power.

“But Maki, would we be able to control something that powerful?”

“When I was trying to examine that thoroughly, Yurika got in my way.”

At her welcoming party, Maki had tried to use her magic to investigate the magic power. But it was difficult to use any powerful spells while participating. At best, she could pretend like she was showing off her cosplay, though she didn't get that many chances. On top of that, having faked a fight(?) and dashed out of the room, Yurika had intervened with her own magic from outside, and Maki had been unable to investigate properly. Yurika could use more powerful spells as she hid on the outside.

“So even here, that accomplice is a problem…”

“I think it's someone incredibly clever. They're always one step ahead.”

“Which means, just how much of a welcoming party was that party supposed to be…?”

“How much? What do you mean?”

Maki showed a confused expression as the girl in violet spoke.

“If there's a welcoming party being held in that room, you would definitely come. And if you were in that room, you would definitely use magic. Maki, it might be that someone took information from you instead.”

Hearing that explanation, Maki was so surprised she even forgot to make an expression.

“It couldn't be… the one that was had was me!?”

Maki couldn't accept that right away. If what the girl in violet had said was true, it would mean that she had lost to Yurika.

“That is most likely the case. In reality, you didn't get any important information regarding the magic power, right? You were lured to that room and had information on your magic taken.”

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

The girl in violet sadly shook her head. And at that point, Maki herself realized her defeat.

“Kuh, I've been had! And not just by Yurika, but by some normal person too!”

This reality was nothing but a complete disgrace to Maki. If her opponent was a magical girl it was one thing, but she had been defeated by a normal person without any power. And if the girl in violet hadn't pointed it out, Maki wouldn't even have noticed her defeat. Maki had been read like an open book and toyed with.

“To think this indigo magician would have her mind manipulated!”

The indigo magic that Maki used was used to manipulate minds. So to Maki, the mind was hers to manipulate. Having her own mind manipulated, and being toyed with in this fashion, was completely unacceptable.

“I get that you're frustrated since you lost, but calm down a little.”

“Shut up!”

Having been criticized by the girl in red, Maki raised an angry voice and glared at her.

“Oh, scary. But that's what you always tell me, Maki.”

However, after hearing the next words, Maki regained her calm.

“…Sorry for shouting.”

“Doesn't that feel good, letting loose every once in a while?”

“I'll just leave it at that.”

After taking several deep breaths, Maki regained her cool and smiled.

“So what will you do, Navy-chan? Wait for us to group up?”

“About that, I was thinking about sneaking into that room.”

“That's dangerous. With that accomplice, I can't recommend hurrying things up.”

Hearing Maki's words, the girl in violet showed a worried expression.

“That's exactly why.”

However, Maki had a serious expression on her face. She had no intention of forcing herself. This was a calm decision she had made.

“The enemy is capable of such great plans. Their advantage will grow the longer we wait. And before the seven of us attack at once, I'd like to flush out that accomplice. If I don't get rid of that accomplice first, we would be making the same mistake again.”

Maki didn't want to repeat the mistake they had made when fighting against Rainbow Nana. Because of that mistake, Darkness Rainbow had been unable to continue operations for over half a year.

“I see… so your goal is that accomplice and not the magic power…”

“Of course, if I get the chance to seize control of it, I would like to. But since there would be problems after seizing control, I have no intention of forcing it.”

Even if Maki gained control of room 106, until the other six arrived, she would have to protect the room all alone from Yurika. With that in mind, seizing control of the room right now wasn't very realistic.

“There're those other people we know nothing about in that room too.”

“You said that apart from that boy, there are two foreign girls and a black haired girl.”

Misunderstanding and Being Misunderstood

“Yes, apart from the black haired girl, they were all at the welcoming party.”

“Hey, Navy-chan, you said something about there being a ghost as well, but is it okay to forget about her?”

“I observed her while pretending I couldn't see her, and she seemed to be communicating with the residents. However, it's still not very clear if she's employed by them or not.”

“But Maki, if you try to do something in that room, won't those guys interrupt you?”

“That's what I'm worried about, so if you're going to do it, it would be better to do it during the day while they're at school.”

Maki and the others were aware of Sanae, Theia, Ruth and Kiriha. But those girls didn't believe in Yurika's identity, so they didn't consider all of them to be a threat.

One of them is probably Yurika's accomplice…

Maki was thinking that either Theia, Ruth or Kiriha was Yurika's accomplice. She had gone to the welcoming party find out exactly who it was, if possible. That's why if she attacked the room while they were all out, only Yurika and her accomplice would take action.

“I understand. In that case I have no objections.”

“I agree as well.”

“Me too!”

The girls approved one after another. In the end, all six of them agreed with Maki's plan. First off, they would need to gather information. Since the majority of the members had been incapacitated with the fight with Rainbow Nana, they were being extra cautious.

“Thank you, everybody.”

Satisfied that everyone had approved of her plan, Maki's calm expression loosened up slightly, revealing a small smile.

Just you wait, Rainbow Yurika! And that cursed accomplice too! I'll reveal your identity soon enough!

And like that, through Maki, the massive misunderstanding regarding Yurika spread through Darkness Rainbow.

Yurika vs Maki

Part 1

Wednesday, November 18

With the winter season approaching, the amount of clothes Koutarou wore as he went to school had increased. Up until now he had only been wearing his uniform, but now he had another piece of clothing underneath his shirt. It was some of Kiriha's old clothes that she had adjusted just for him.

“Ah, it's warm, but not too warm. It's just right.”

“That's good to hear. Since those are my old clothes, please just endure it.”

Having put on his uniform, Koutarou was delighted. The undergarment Kiriha had made was soft and warm, and it didn't get in the way when he tried to move. The breathability of the fabric was sufficient, so it wasn't too warm either. To Koutarou who moved around a lot, it was perfect.

“Instead of enduring, I'm thankful you gave me something this good, Kiriha-san.”

“Well, I was planning on throwing it away. It would be better for you to wear it.”

“…Or so you say. Kiriha. You had no intention of throwing that away, did you?”

While having her hair dried by Ruth, Theia opened her mouth. Hearing those words, Sanae's interest was piqued.

“What does that mean?”

“The fabric of that undergarment is probably worth more than all of Koutarou's belongings put together.”

“Seriously!? Show me, Koutarou!”

“H-Hey…”

Surprised, Sanae put her face on Koutarou's chest. Since she was a ghost, she was able to pass through his uniform and look directly at the undergarment.

“Based on the appearance and touch, it's clearly made from expensive materials. And based on the craftsmanship, it must have been made by a master craftsman.”

“Now that you mention it, it does feel like that. It's very comfortable too.”

Hanging on to Koutarou, Sanae was able to share his senses, and she could clearly feel the texture of the undergarment.

“Throwing it away is unthinkable. Normally it would be passed down to daughter or granddaughter. Changing that into an undergarment and giving it to Koutarou is flat out insane.”

Yurika vs Maki

Yurika vs Maki

“I-Is that true, Kiriha-san?”

Hearing what Theia said, Koutarou anxiously turned towards to Kiriha. As he did, he could see her gentle smile.

“As expected from an interstellar princess, you have a well trained eye.”

Kiriha affirmed Theia's words in a roundabout way. Hearing that, Koutarou's face turned blue.

“I-I'll give it back! I-I can't accept something that amazing!”

Learning the truth, Koutarou hurriedly unbuttoned his uniform. However, Kiriha's white finger stopped his hands.

“Koutarou, even if you give it back now, it won't return to the clothing it once was.”

“B-But-”

“Having you use it like that will make me happy.”

Kiriha whispered into Koutarou's ear while smiling.

“Even if you say that, I can't just casually wear something worth more than all of my belongings put together!”

“Then get used to it.”

“As if I could!!”

As Koutarou continued resisting, Kiriha buttoned up his uniform.

“…That's how you overcome his defenses, one at a time.”

Sanae looked over the two of them with a frosty stare. That was because she had realized Kiriha's mode of operation.

“I'll make sure to scold Koutarou later…”

Sanae kept staring at Kiriha's back, thinking to herself that it's her and her duty alone to protect Koutarou.

“Ruth, we can't be careless or she'll sweep us off our feet.”

Theia was in a bad mood because she knew Kiriha's goal. And because she hadn't publicly given her present, the treasure sword, Saguratin, to Koutarou she was feeling impatient.

“Fufufu, oh your highness.”

Since Ruth knew that, she smiled as she looked at Theia pout. Imagining what would happen when Theia's impatience reached it limit, Ruth couldn't keep herself from smiling.

“Koutarou, your coat. If we don't leave soon we'll be late.”

Having finished buttoning up Koutarou's shirt, Kiriha pushed his coat onto him.

“Ugh.”

Koutarou desperately wanted to say something back but after hearing that he was about to be late, he found himself unable to say anything.

Yurika vs Maki

Part 2

As Koutarou and the others left for school, something began moving in the empty room 106.

Leaving behind a loud noise, the sliding door of the wardrobe opened slightly. When Koutarou had first moved in, the door was able to open without any sound, but after the thing inside ended up leaning on the door while sleeping from time to time, it now left behind a painful loud noise.

“Did Satomi-san and the others already leave…?”

Yurika peeked her face through the open sliding door. As she peeked through the door, she looked around the room and listened attentively.

“…It looks like it's okay.”

After looking and listening, Yurika fully opened the sliding door. For some reason, what she was wearing wasn't her school uniform, but her magic girl outfit.

“If they see me in this outfit, things would just get confusing again…”

Yurika climbed out from the upper half of the wardrobe. For Yurika, who wasn't very physically active, climbing up and down the wardrobe was troublesome work.

“Alright.”

After climbing out from the wardrobe, Yurika reached in and pulled out a long cane. The cane's name was 'Angel Halo.' It was the cane she used when casting magic.

“Now that Maki is here, I don't have the time to go to school!”

Yurika slapped her cheeks and pumped herself up.

“Yurika Fight! Yurika Fight!”

I'm a bit sad I can't go to school, but I already gave up on going, so I don't mind!

The enemy had finally appeared. The time had come for her to fulfil her duty. Because of that, Yurika ignored going to school and stayed behind to fend off Maki.

And if possible, she wanted Koutarou and the others to know that she was a magical girl who fought for love and courage.

“Now, come, Maki-chan! The magical girl of love and courage ☆ Rainbow Yurika will be your opponent!”

Up until now, Yurika had constantly been telling Koutarou and the others that she was a magical girl, but it was at this moment that she finally became one, in the true meaning of the word.

Part 3

The bell signaling that it's time for lunch went off. As it did, the English teacher in front of the blackboard put down the chalk.

“Alright, that's all. The rest will be your homework, please let Nijino-san and… uhm… Aika-san, was it? Please let those two who aren't here today know.”

“Stand up, bow.”

The class showed their respect as the English teacher left the classroom. At the same time, the strict atmosphere in the room lightened up.

“Lunch time! Food!”

“Kana, did you bring food with you, or are you heading to the cafeteria?”

“I'm heading for the cafeteria.”

“If you're heading for the vending machine, buy some juice for me.”

“Only if you'll pay up for mine too.”

Lunchtime, it was the time in school when all the students loosened up. Everyone spent their time eating their meals and freshened up.

“In the end, Yurika didn't show up.”

Meanwhile, Koutarou stared at Yurika's empty seat.

“She usually comes running in before the second period too.”

Sanae only looked at Yurika's seat with a mysterious expression.

Yurika would often be late because she had trouble waking up, so Koutarou and the others didn't think much of her missing out on the first period. Once they entered the second period, they assumed she must have really overslept this time. The third period started, they still thought that she must have stayed up really late. It wasn't until the fourth period that they found it odd and began worrying.

“If she continues coming in late like this she'll have to repeat a grade.”

“Her grades aren't all that good either…”

While Koutarou and Sanae were worrying over their missing companion, Theia brought Ruth with her and approached them.

“If you're talking about Yurika, she was up until late last night making a fuss. She probably just overslept.”

“She must be excited now that Maki-san is here.”

Koutarou imagined Yurika staying up all night working on an outfit for Maki inside the wardrobe.

“I haven't seen that Aika Maki in question since this morning either.”

Kiriha also joined the group.

“In Maki-sama's case, wouldn't it be because she just moved and has a lot of things to do?”

“Is that really it, I wonder. I'm getting caught up on both Maki and Yurika being gone.”

“It couldn't be…”

Listening to Ruth and Sanae, a theory popped into Koutarou's head. Having worked throughout the night on Maki's outfit, Yurika called her out in the morning and was now forcing her to cosplay.

Yurika vs Maki

Then there's what happened yesterday…

Next up, Koutarou remembered how Yurika acted during yesterday's welcoming party. At that time, Yurika was desperately pleading with Koutarou, telling him that Maki was dangerous. Even if he disregarded the magical girl part, it was still possible that Yurika had some trouble with Maki in the past. It was enough to cause her to cry and run out of the room after all.

"I guess it can't be helped."

Koutarou kicked his chair away and stood up. As he did, the surrounding people focused on him.

"What's wrong, Koutarou?"

"I'll go check up on Yurika."

"But if you go now, it'll take up the whole lunch hour."

"Maki-san not being here either is bothering me. I just hope Yurika isn't causing any trouble for her."

Koutarou was almost certain it was cosplay related. But he couldn't disregard the possibility of trouble. She could also be out cold with a fever.

No matter what it is, I should go check it out.

Koutarou who put action before thought didn't like anxiously sitting on a worry.

"Satomi-sama, I'll come with you."

"That's okay, Ruth-san. If something happens I'll call you."

"But…"

"Besides, it'll be faster if I go on my own."

Koutarou was grateful about Ruth's suggestion, but he would be able to get home rather quickly if he was alone. He would probably make it back to school in time for the next period too.

"Koutarou, your coat."

"Thank you, Kiriha-san."

Foreseeing Koutarou's next action, Kiriha brought him his coat. With her help, Koutarou put it on.

"By the way, Theia."

"What?"

"Why did you know that Yurika was doing something in the middle of the night? Didn't you go back to your spaceship?"

"Ah!?"

As Sanae asked her, Theia's face revealed her shock. She had been caught completely off guard.

"T-T-T-T-That's… I-I forgot something, yes! I forgot something in the room and I came back to get it!"

She couldn't possibly say that she came to look at Koutarou's sleeping face.

"Hmm. Good thing you were able to get it before Koutarou crushed it."

But fortunately, Sanae didn't ask for any special reason, and accepted Theia's words as the truth.

“T-That's true. Haha, Hahahahah.”

As Theia laughed to hide the truth, Koutarou finished buttoning up his coat.

“Right. I'll get going.”

“Ah, I'll come too!”

As Koutarou headed for the door, Sanae hurriedly chased after him.

“Mackenzie, I'm heading back home for a moment!”

“Hm? What's up?”

“I forgot something!”

“Idiot.”

After exchanging some words with Kenji, Koutarou jumped out of the classroom with Sanae.

“Muu…”

Seeing Koutarou and Sanae together, Theia was for some reason in a bad mood.

“Why didn't you say that you went to look at Satomi-sama's sleeping face?”

“A-As if I could say something like that!”

Theia blushed and looked outside of the window as if to hide her face.

“And right now, you actually wanted to go with Satomi-sama, right?”

In reality, Ruth had suggested going with Koutarou for Theia's sake.

“…”

“If you're too stubborn you'll lose out.”

“As if a princess could beg to her vassal!”

As Theia said that, Ruth smiled.

“If Satomi-sama was just a vassal, that might be true.”

“He is just a vassal! Of course he is!”

Theia glanced at Koutarou who had just run outside of the school. Next to him was Sanae.

Why doesn't he ask me to come with him! Why did he only bring Sanae!?

Theia complained about Koutarou as she stared at his back, until he ran under the gate and she could no longer see him.

Yurika vs Maki

Part 4

As Koutarou left the school, Yurika stood in the middle of room 106. She had closed both of her eyes and held her cane above her head; it was almost as if she was focusing on trying to listen to something. She was in the middle of using detection magic to determine if Maki was approaching or not.

“…It doesn't look like Maki-chan is anywhere near here.”

After focusing for a while, Yurika opened her eyes and took a deep breath. Even though she prepared herself for the oncoming fight, Yurika couldn't help but tense up. She didn't know if it would happen today, tomorrow or in a week. Even then, thinking that if she lost it was all over, Yurika was incredibly nervous.

That's when it happened.

The sound of something small hitting something hard entered Yurika's ears. She imagined it was a small stone hitting the window.

“What is… Ah!?”

As she looked towards the window, she could see a single bat. The bat hung upside down off the window frame and looked down on Yurika.

“This bat, could it be Maki-chan's…”

It was still mid-afternoon, much too early for bats to be flying around. And the way it looked down on Yurika was different from normal bats, almost as if it possessed intelligence. Because of that, Yurika figured that it was a bat Maki had sent her way.

“You are correct, Nijino Yurika.”

“Maki-chan!”

It was just as Yurika had assumed. The bats eyes shone red, and Maki's voice could be heard. It was a familiar Maki had sent in order to talk to Yurika.

“What business do you have?”

“There's only one business between the two of us, right?”

Yurika talked to the bat in a nervous voice. In contrast to Yurika, Maki spoke in more of a teasing tone of voice.

“I wanted to finish things with you but I can't just burst into the room and fall right in there, now can I? That's why I sent this one to you.”

“Finishing… is fighting really all we can do?”

“A foolish question. That kind of discussion ended several hundred years ago.”

Rainbow Heart and Darkness Rainbow had a long history together. Their battle had been going on for over several hundred years.

“Then it can't be helped. I'll fulfil my duty too.”

“Straight to the point. With that in mind I have a request; would you mind coming out from there?”

“Come out?”

“Yes, that's right. I don't think it's that bad of deal for either of us.”

“That's…”

Yurika vs Maki

Maki was cautious of any traps in room 106, and was hesitant in entering. And Yurika didn't want to have a fight in the middle of her room. If they were going to fight, both of them wanted to do so outside of room 106.

“But if I leave this room, your friends might come.”

Yurika couldn’t make up her mind right away. Maki had six allies. If Yurika carelessly left the room, those six girls might come and occupy it. She couldn't just ignore that risk.

“They won't come.”

“Do you have any guarantees?”

“I don't. You only have my words to go on. But remember, have I ever told a lie?”

“That's…”

Yurika was hesitant. It was true that up until now, Maki hadn't told a lie. The other magical girls would lie and deceive her, but oddly enough, Maki only spoke the truth. But even then, Yurika couldn't make up her mind.

“Besides, I want to cast a wide-area barrier to keep people away.”

What convinced Yurika were Maki's next words. Barriers were one of the traditional techniques used to keep the existence of magical girls a secret.

Since neither side wanted to be found by normal people, they would always cast such a spell before a battle.

“…I understand.”

Yurika nodded her head. She also wanted to have a large barrier. And since she was aware of her own experience, she didn't want to fight in a small area. Taking those risks and Maki's words into account, Yurika agreed to leave the room.

“Then, follow this one, it'll guide you to me. Don't worry, there are no traps.”

“Okay, I got it.”

Yurika left the small room and headed for the battleground.

Part 5

“Is it really this way? Our surroundings are just getting more and more isolated…”

“It's okay, it's okay. I can smell Yurika's spiritual energy.”

Koutarou's nose twitched as he followed Sanae's direction into a residential district. Since they couldn't find Yurika when they reached room 106, Koutarou had Sanae follow Yurika's traces. Since Sanae was a ghost, she was able to sense Yurika's presence.

“What does it smell like?”

“I guess it's some sort of artificial smell? It's like cup noodles.”

“Cup noodles huh… I still don't get it…”

“Ah, then let's do it like this.”

Coming up with something, Sanae stopped flying in front of Koutarou and clung onto his back.

“What are you going to do?”

“Well, when I do this, I can feel what you feel, right? So I figured we might be able to do it the other way around.”

Sanae wrapped her arms around Koutarou's neck like always and put her head on his shoulder. As she did, Koutarou's senses began picking up something different from normal.

“Oh, I can see something strange!”

“Nishishi, this is Sanae-chan's maiden-like power!”

Right now, Koutarou was able to see spiritual energy. The spiritual energy could be seen as white light. It was shining, like a living creature. Since the light blended with the scenery, he could hazily see people through the other side of the wall.

His ears were the same. He could still hear sounds like always, but on top of that, he could also hear the spiritual energy of powerful people and creatures. He was able to distinguish people based on the sound. And then there was the smell. His nose was the same as his ears; it became able to sense spiritual energy. But unlike the ears, he was able to sense traces; he could sense and distinguish the traces of spiritual energy in the air.

“Do you always sense stuff like this…?”

“Amazing, isn't it?”

Sanae laughed with pride. Seeing that smile, a large amount of Sanae's feelings began flowing into him. Most of it was pride for her own ability and the desire to be praised. On top of that was a deep trust and affection towards Koutarou.

“Amazing, amazing.”

“Tehehehe.”

As I thought, she really is lonely without her parents…

Koutarou thought of it like that as he patted Sanae on the head.

“So, can you feel it, Koutarou, the smell of cup noodles?”

“Let's see.”

Koutarou pointed his nose into the air and began smelling. Amongst the many smells, he could in fact sense the smell of cup noodles.

“Oooh! I can feel it, it's this!”

Yurika vs Maki

“Yeah. That's what Yurika's spiritual energy smells like.”

“Is it different depending on the person?”

“Yeah. Theia has a scent of flowers, and Kiriha has the smell of the forest in the morning.”

“Hmm… and what about me?”

Koutarou put his nose on his own clothes. But just like his normal scent, he wasn't able to discern the smell of his spiritual energy.

“Koutarou's is… a secret♪”

Koutarou has the same smell as dad.

Sanae hid her words behind a smile.

Yurika vs Maki

Part 6

Yurika had been led to a construction site by the bat. As she reached the site, she carefully walked into it.

“Construction is paused for the day…”

There were no signs of people around Yurika. The industrial heavy machinery had stopped. The construction site was wrapped in silence.

“Welcome, Nijino Yurika.”

“Maki-chan.”

Maki stood in the center of the construction site, waiting for Yurika. Yurika moved to within ten meters away and stopped.

Right now, Maki was wearing her magical girl outfit, just like Yurika. The design was somewhat similar to Yurika's, but the color was different; it had a deep indigo color instead. Since her entire outfit had an indigo color, she gave off the impression of being a magician, much more so than Yurika's outfit. In her hand she held her cane, Twilight Wing. This was Maki's battle outfit; the true appearance of the magical girl, Darkness Navy.

There was a reason for the girls to transform into that kind of outfit. The clothes and cane had a function of amplifying the casting speed and power of their magic, and their magic was several times more powerful than when they were wearing their normal clothes. Koutarou probably wouldn't accept that but it's not like they wore it because they wanted to.

“Surprisingly enough, you're wearing it so boldly now. Back when it was spring, you were so timid-looking in it.”

“I haven't spent these past eight months just playing.”

Yurika swallowed her own spit and readied her cane. Normally, Yurika would be easily beaten down by the people around her, but she had spent these past eight months giving it her best. And that hard work had trained and prepared her for this fight.

“Of course you have.”

In response to that, Maki readied her cane as well.

Magic combat aside, she seems to have gathered some experience…

Maki recalled Yurika's figure in the past. Back then, she had simply swung her cane around, casting spells wildly while running away from her enemies. As Yurika stepped onto the battleground with brave steps, Maki couldn't help but admit her growth.

“You really won't step down, will you?”

“I told you that discussion is over.”

Maki's expression grew a little darker as she pointed her cane towards Yurika. They both began chanting at the same time.

“Sanctuary – Modifier – Effective Area – Colossal.”

Their two voices overlapped like in a chorus, and just like that, a single spell extended across the entire construction site. They were casting a barrier to keep people away from their battleground.

“Here I come, Rainbow Yurika!”

“I'll definitely win!”

Yurika vs Maki

That spell also signaled the start of their battle. Once the spell had finished, the two of them moved into action.

“First off-”

As expected, Maki who had more experience made the first move.

“Energy Bolt – Target Option – Sidewinder!”

Alongside Maki's loud voice, a shining arrow came flying out from her indigo cane. The arrow crawled across the construction site, avoiding obstacles in its way as it approached Yurika.

“Quick Cast – Multiple Energy Bolt – Target Option – Spread!!”

Yurika vs Maki

Yurika vs Maki

In return, Yurika swung her cane and chanted a spell. Like with Maki's cane, arrows of light came flying out. Even though Yurika had acted later, she still finished her spell faster and created a larger amount of arrows. Yurika's arrows rained down on Maki's. Maki's arrows crawled and dodged several of Yurika's, but in the end they were unable to fully avoid getting hit, and both sides' spells collided in the air.

The arrows exploded as they collided, though it wasn't all that big. However, it had enough power to cause some serious injuries if a normal person was caught up in it. The explosion created a loud sound and a shockwave, shaking the empty construction site.

"Well done, Rainbow Yurika!"

As she said that, Maki continued running. Her soft hair and indigo outfit fluttered in the wind as she ran.

"Maki-chan too!"

"But this is where the real battle starts, Rainbow Yurika!"

As I thought, other than mind manipulation magic, Yurika is on top! She really is Nana's successor!

Maki let out brave words, but on the inside she cursed Yurika. Yurika had generally mastered all types of magic and her outfit and cane had been reinforced with the usage of all types of magic in mind. On the other hand, Maki had specialized in the indigo type of magic, mind manipulation, and her outfit and cane had been reinforced specially for just that type of magic. If one specialized in a single type of magic type, like Maki, they would be incredibly proficient, but all the other types would be less effective. Because of that, if they were to fight against someone with equal skill, they would lose if they didn't rely on their specialty.

"In that case!"

Maki swung her cane and pointed the center towards Yurika. Seeing that, Yurika began moving her cane as well.

"I-Is she coming!?"

In terms of physical prowess, Yurika was far inferior to Maki, meaning Maki was still faster than her.

"Got you!! Flash!!"

Just before entering her magic's effective range, Maki quickly began casting.

"Oh—"

Before Yurika could even react, Maki had already cast her spell. Her cane let out a flash of light; it was the same spell she had used once to rob her opponent of their sight. Although it was a basic spell, based on how it was used, its effectiveness varied. Maki's use of it in this case was splendid. Expecting an attack, Yurika had focused on Maki and got caught up in the flash.

"My eyes! I can't see!"

Since the flash had been fired from outside of its effective attack range, Yurika was only blinded for two to three seconds. However, that time was enough for Maki to line up her next attack.

"Tiny Memory Flash – Mode – Extend Length!"

"Anti-Magical Shield!"

"You're too late!"

Yurika vs Maki

Yurika desperately tried to cast a defensive spell, but since she was blinded and unable to move, Maki was able to cast hers first. The indigo ball of light emitted from the top of Maki's cane flew towards Yurika.

“Kya!?”

As the ball of light came into contact with her, her entire body was suddenly covered by the light. As it hit, Yurika did something strange.

“Anti-Magical Shield!”

She recast the spell she had just used.

“Eh, what?”

Obviously, that spell ended in vain. Maki hadn't used any new magic to attack, and she stopped moving as yellow light from her spell enveloped her body.

“W-Where's Maki-chan!?”

Yurika's strange actions continued. Even though she had regained her vision, she had completely lost sight of Maki. She was looking for Maki in the opposite direction of where she really was.

“Right here.”

Because of the state she was in, Yurika couldn’t see where Maki was until she was struck by Maki's red glowing fist.

“Kyaaaaa!”

Suffering a clean hit, Yurika was blown away, and got knocked onto the ground. If it wasn't for the magic shield that she had just cast, that blow would have been enough to knock her out.

“W-What is…”

As her head loosely shook back and forth from the damage, Yurika desperately tried to force herself up. She didn't know what was going on. Maki had released a flash of light, and was about to cast another spell, so Yurika had cast a defensive spell on herself. But in the next moment, Maki was by her side and came in swinging. Even though she was supposed to be casting a spell right in front of her.

“Did you forget what my specialty is?”

Maki stopped and faced Yurika who was getting up from the ground. Yurika realized what had happened as she saw the tension in Maki's face.

“T-That's right, Maki-chan's specialty was indigo!”

The spell that Maki had used right after the flash erased the memories of its target. However, trying to use any large-scale memory altering drained a lot of magic power. So Maki limited the memory being erased to a few seconds, which reduced the magic power used and allowed her to use it in battle. At first glance, losing a few seconds doesn't seem like a big deal. But in the middle of a fierce battle where the situation was constantly changing, getting hit by that spell was almost as if your opponent had just vanished.

And because Maki knew what her opponent would do next, she would be able to get in a clean hit on her opponent. Since Maki was physically fit, the damage from one hit packed quite a punch. Flash, Erase and attacking with a magic infused physical attack; that was Maki's favorite combination attack.

“Yurika, just stay down. For someone like you, it's impossible to keep on fighting. You'll just die.”

Yurika vs Maki

“Maki-chan really is strong… but!”

Yurika used her cane for support as she stood up. She hadn't given up. Since she had been knocked into a part of the construction site where the soil was exposed, her entire body was covered in dirt. But her eyes continued to shine beautifully.

“But if I give up just because of something like this, I can't call myself a resident of room 106! Theia-chan and Kiriha-chan are much, much stronger!”

“So you'll still stand… It seems you at least have guts.”

Seeing Yurika like that, Maki let out a voice of admiration.

As I thought, she is far more mentally stable than before…

Eight months ago, when she had just become a magical girl, Yurika would have run away if she had been hit by Maki's attack.

Just who is it that makes Yurika this brave… I'm getting more and more interested. Hurry up and show your face, accomplice!

Maki pumped herself up at the thought of the rival she had still yet to see. But on the other side, she began feeling irritation at the same time. She couldn't trust anyone. Others were made to be subdued by power. Since Maki felt like that, the mere thought of the person Yurika trusted only served to anger her.

“Maki-chan, the fight's not over yet!”

“Well said, Rainbow Yurika!”

Yurika readied herself and Maki did the same. She let out a fearless smile on her lips. The fight between the magical girls had only just begun.

Part 7

“This is the place?”

“Yeah. I can smell cup noodles from here.”

Sanae and Koutarou arrived at a construction site at the outskirt of the town. Surrounding the construction site were steel walls; based on the size of the site, the apartment house being built here must have been several hundred square meters big.

“But something's strange.”

However, Sanae stood in front of the construction site and tilted her head.

“What's strange?”

“The smell ends there.”

Sanae pointed towards the door leading into the construction site. Yurika's smell that she had been following ended exactly there.

“Since it's a door, isn't it only natural for the smell to stop?”

“It's not a real smell, so a door can't get in the way.”

“Oh right, that's true.”

Koutarou remembered that he had been able to sense people through walls when Sanae had been clinging onto him.

“If it ends right there it could mean… that, Yurika dropped dead on the floor right behind it?”

“Don't say scary things like that.”

Sanae sent punches flying towards Koutarou, but since the fists weren't filled with hostility, Koutarou couldn't feel any pain.

“For the time being, let's just go take a look. If we don't check out the inside, we'll have come all this way for nothing.”

“That's true.”

Quick to take action, Koutarou opened the door to the construction site. He peeked in through the open door.

“There doesn't seem to be any bodies.”

“Geez, you're always so mean.”

“Sorry, sorry.”

Koutarou apologized to Sanae and entered the construction site without making a sound. He didn't want to be found by anyone working there.

“Seems like they're still working on the foundation…”

Looking around the area, Koutarou spotted several heavy machinery, and further in he could see a large hole dug for the foundation to be put into place.

“We're in luck. Seems like the workers are off today.”

There were no workers to be seen inside. As Koutarou let out a sigh of relief, he could hear Sanae's pitiful voice.

“Wait, Koutarou~”

“What are you doing?”

Yurika vs Maki

When Koutarou turned around, Sanae was doing something by the door.

“It's almost like there's a wall here.”

“A wall?”

Koutarou returned to the door, and like Sanae had said, it was almost as she was pressed up against an invisible glass wall.

“Ahahahahaha, what a funny face.”

Trying to get in, Sanae was pushing her face against the invisible wall, causing her face to look like that of a pig’s.

“Hey, don't laugh and do something!”

“Even if you say that…”

Holding back his laughter, Koutarou approached Sanae. Meanwhile, Sanae continued her fight with the cursed invisible wall.

Yurika vs Maki

Yurika vs Maki

“It's unfair that only you can get in!”

Koutarou and Sanae stood face to face by the door frame. Judging from Sanae's appearance, there seemed to be an invisible wall there.

“What to do…”

“Just do something.”

“Alright, then I'll try pulling you in.”

“Please do.”

Koutarou reached his hand out towards Sanae. Even as he reached the invisible wall keeping Sanae out, his hand didn't stop.

“That's unfair, you’re the only one not affected.”

“There, there. I'm pulling.”

“Okay.”

As Koutarou grabbed Sanae's hand, he pulled her towards him.

“Ah!?”

When he did, Sanae easily passed through the door. Just a few moments ago she had tried so hard to get through in vain, and now she easily passed through without any problems.

“W-Why!? It was useless just a second ago!”

“I don't really understand the mechanisms very well, but the cause was probably that.”

Koutarou pointed towards a nearby small shrine.

“What's that?”

“It's purification. It's put there before construction to… uhm… what was it?”

“Ah, I've seen that on TV! If they don't put it there they'll be cursed and bad things happen, like cranes falling over.

“Yeah, that.”

The shrine had been made at the groundbreaking ceremony to pray for the safe construction of the building. Koutarou figured that the shrine was the reason Sanae had been unable to enter.

“I don't curse.”

But Sanae wasn't satisfied. She pouted since she didn't like being treated like an evil spirit.

“You were able to get in because you don't curse, right?”

“I see. I got in because I get along with you.”

After Koutarou said that, Sanae regained her good mood and began looking around the construction site with great interest.

“Ah, I can smell Yurika's smell.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. It seems like she's in that direction.”

Sanae was able to pick up Yurika's smell once more. She then pointed in the direction of the big pit that had been dug for the foundation.

“Alright, let's go.”

Yurika vs Maki

“Yeah. The fifth period is about to start too.”

“Geez, what is that idiot doing in a place like this.”

Koutarou and Sanae began walking towards the pit.

However, the two of them had been wrong; there was a big misunderstanding at play here.

What kept Sanae out from the construction site had not been the shrine.

Part 8

“What's this!?”

“Someone's coming!”

Maki and Yurika both pulled their canes away. Their fight was still going on, but the two of them had sensed an oddity and temporarily stopped fighting.

“There's someone that can pass through barriers!?”

“Why on earth!?”

The two of them had stopped their fighting because someone had passed through the barrier. Maki and Yurika had both cast a barrier, meaning there was a double layered barrier around the construction site. It was next to impossible for a normal person to get through that. However, someone who had done that had appeared. Because of that, the two of them stopped their fight.

“There she is!”

“Yurika, what are you doing over there!?”

Both Yurika and Maki turned to look in the direction those voices had come from.

“S-Satomi-san!?”

“That's the resident of room 106!! I think his name was Satomi Koutarou!!”

When they turned to look, they saw Koutarou and Sanae. Yurika and Maki had been fighting at the bottom of the shallow pit dug for the foundation. Koutarou and Sanae stood at the edge and looked down at the two surprised girls.

“Satomi-san, Sanae-chan, why are you here!?”

“Yurika, how long are you going to play around here!? Limit yourself, will you!?”

“Yeah! Think about the problems you're causing us for a change!”

Having found Yurika, the two of them began scolding her. The time was now half past 1, the fifth period had already started.

“…I see, so that's how it was. I've had a huge misunderstanding!”

Unlike Yurika who was purely surprised, Maki's surprise was much deeper.

“That man, Satomi Koutarou, learned magic on his own! And he's also the one controlling that ghost! And he is Nijino Yurika's accomplice!”

That was how Maki interpreted Koutarou's appearance. Of course, that wasn't the case. It was just her one-sided misunderstanding.

“Being able to pass through mine and Yurika's barrier without destroying it means that you either use degenerating or reinforcing type magic! And since you're controlling that ghost with so much spiritual energy, your necromancy is at quite a high level as well! At the very least, you can use two colors, and you're even more powerful than Yurika!”

Based on the fact that he was able to pass through the barrier, Koutarou couldn't just be a normal person. And since the ghost had passed through as well, it was hard to think of her as a natural ghost. Since Koutarou had arrived at the battleground with the ghost, it was only natural to assume that he was controlling her.

I was far too naïve. He's far from just helping her out with plans! To think she had this kind of trump card hidden up her sleeves!

Yurika vs Maki

In the case that Koutarou had the kind of powers Maki was imagining, if all seven magical girls of Darkness Rainbow went on an all-out attack, they would easily fall prey to his trap. Just imagining that caused a chill to run down Maki's spine.

“Thank god I found him before all seven of us gathered… To think he's a master of necromancy and either reinforcement or degeneration. I don't even want to think what would happen if…”

Ghosts strengthened by magic or walking corpses. Changing the toxicity of ghouls or departed souls through the use of degeneration. The already troublesome undead could be strengthened by magic and come attack them. If they suffered a surprise attack by something like that while they were busy with Yurika, even the top officers of Darkness Rainbow would be in danger. Maki felt incredibly fortunate and thankful that she had gone scouting alone. Right now, even in the worst case scenario she would be the only casualty.

“In that case, I'll at least take you with me, Yurika!”

Maki was convinced that the true enemy wasn't Yurika. She was certain it was Koutarou, the mysterious man who was both cunning, crafty and held great magic power. With that in mind, Maki assumed it was impossible to defeat both Koutarou and Yurika right now. In that case, she was going to defeat Yurika, and reduce some of Koutarou's power. It was all a massive misunderstanding, but Maki's decision was precise and swift.

“Come on, get over here, Yurika. We're going home.”

“No Satomi-san, just accept reality already!”

“That's my line!”

Maki sprinted towards Yurika and Koutarou who were talking.

Now that they're preoccupied with their conversation, this is my best chance!

Maki grabbed her cane with both hands and started her incantation without slowing down. If she used the type of magic she specialized in, she would be able to focus on casting it, even though she was sprinting.

“Bind Person – Modi—”

“Ah!? Maki-san, it's already over!”

Koutarou noticed what Maki was doing and tried to stop her in the middle of her incantation.

Don't make a fool of me, It's not over yet!

However, Maki didn't stop. Instead she interpreted Koutarou's words as provocation and it enraged her.

“Maki-chan!? Oh no!”

“—fier – Double Effect!”

“Quick Cast – Anti-Magical Shield!”

Having sped up her incantation, Yurika finished casting her spell first. Before the indigo colored bullet could reach Yurika, a yellow light enveloped her body.

“I win!”

However, seeing that, instead of feeling disturbed, Maki felt certain of her victory and closed in on Yurika. The next moment, the bullet of light hit her.

“Kyaaaaa!”

Yurika vs Maki

Despite her defensive spell protecting her, Yurika let out a scream. Maki's magic activated twice; it was a single spell with twice the effect. Yurika's defensive spell only protected her from the first effect, so it wasn't able to block the second.

“M-My body is-”

The spell implanted a deep suggestion into its target, depriving the target of their freedom. Having been hit from the spell, Yurika wasn't able to move so much as a finger.

“Ooooh, for someone who skipped school to practice, well done.”

“Koutarou, Koutarou, a beam just came from the tip of the cane! A beam!”

Seeing that, Koutarou and Sanae clapped and let out words of admiration. Even the two of them couldn't help but be surprised by the bullet of light fired from Maki's cane.

“It seems like they're pretending that being hit by that makes you unable to move.”

“A beam huh… recent cosplayers seem to pay careful attention to detail. I wonder how they're doing it.”

“Who knows. The advancement of technology is so fast. It's hard to follow.”

“…Koutarou, you're like an old man.”

“Leave me alone.”

But even then, it only looked like cosplay to the two of them. Unaware that Yurika was in a pinch, they casually laughed.

“Ah geez, the tension is being ruined… Oh right, I need to hurry up and do something!”

Yurika was annoyed by Koutarou and Sanae's reaction as she tried to escape from the binding spell.

“You're too late, Yurika! I win!”

Before Yurika could move her body, Maki reached her. Maki's legs were glowing red; she was planning on finishing the immobile Yurika off with a deadly kick powered up by her magic.

“Sorry for getting in the way of your fun, but…”

“Tsk!”

However, just before Maki's kick could slam into Yurika, she stopped and jumped back.

“As I thought you won't just leave me be, Satomi Koutarou!!”

Maki had fallen back because Koutarou had come down to the bottom of the pit.

“Of course I won't…”

Koutarou smiled wryly at Maki as he moved towards Yurika who couldn't move.

“Come on, stop playing around, we're going back Yurika.”

“S-Satomi-san, it's dangerous! Please hurry and hide somewhere.”

“The only thing in danger is you as you're about to repeat a grade.”

As Koutarou said that he put his hand on Yurika's shoulder.

Geez, all you do is play…

Amazed, Koutarou sighed lightly.

“Look, just hurry up and let's go.”

Yurika vs Maki

“Even if you say that, I can't move my body! So please just run!”

Yurika was still under the influence of Maki's magic, the only thing she could move was her head. It was almost like the rest of her body had turned to lead.

“I said let's go. If you don't cut it out, I'll get angry.”

“Ah!?”

The moment Koutarou pulled on Yurika, something unexpected happened.

“I-I can move!? I can move my body!”

Yurika's body regained its freedom all of a sudden. Surprised by her sudden freedom, she touched her body to confirm that she was alright.

“Of course you can, geez.”

There's no such thing as magic, so of course she could move. Koutarou was amazed from the bottom of his heart and began rubbing his temples.

“T-That right now was—”

However, Maki's surprise far surpassed Yurika's. She couldn't believe what had just happened.

“He dispelled it!? And without using any incantations!?”

The moment Koutarou had pulled on Yurika, his palm had let out a white glow for just an instant. At that point, the magic binding Yurika was still very strong. But the moment that white light touched her, the magic holding Yurika prisoner dispersed, freeing her.

“Impossible… I've never heard of white magic… More importantly, just how much magic power would it take to dispel my magic without the use of a cane or incantation…?”

It was the same white light that had saved Koutarou and the others from several dangers in the past. But the only one that noticed that was Maki, who treated Koutarou as a threat. Because of that, the doubts brewing inside of her grew larger and larger.

“Even if he was making up for the lack of cane and outfit with some other magical item, I can't underestimate his ability to use magic without incantation or movement. It looks like I'll need to use that…”

No matter what kind of magic Satomi Koutarou uses, with that it will at the very least…

Maki's eyes narrowed, a grin appeared on her face.

“Let's go, Yurika. This is over.”

“Yeah. I can understand why you would practice something this large-scale in secret, but there's still a limit to things.”

“I'm not practicing, I'm really fighting!”

While Yurika and Koutarou argued, Maki called out a nearby materials storage.

“Come out, Sakuraba Harumi!”

“Eh!?”

“Sakuraba-senpai!?”

Hearing that unexpected name come from Maki's lips, Koutarou and the others hurriedly turned around.

“S-Satomi-kun, Nijino-san.”

Yurika vs Maki

Harumi in her uniform appeared from behind the materials storage. But Harumi was acting strange. Her expression was pale and her movement was awkward. Seeing that, Koutarou worriedly called out to her.

“What's wrong, Sakuraba-senpai!?”

“I don't know either. M-My body is moving on its own, there's nothing I can do!”

Harumi was frightened by her limbs moving on their own. If you were just doing your thing and your body suddenly stopped listening to you, anyone would feel the same way.

“Sakuraba-senpai!”

“I'll save you right away!”

“Why is Harumi even here…”

Understanding that Harumi was distressed, Koutarou and the others rushed towards her. Koutarou couldn't imagine that Harumi would lie.

“That won't do.”

“S-Satomi-kun!”

However, Maki was faster, and stood by Harumi's side. Seeing that, Koutarou and the others stopped.

“What's the meaning of this, Maki-san!”

“Well, that's obvious.”

Maki pointed her cane towards Harumi.

“I see, so this is your doing, Maki-chan!”

“That's right, Yurika. No matter how strong you and that man are, can you fight me while protecting this girl?”

“Don't be unreasonable, you guys! Unlike you, Sakuraba-senpai has a weak constitution! Don't involve her in this!!”

“I wouldn't do anything like that! I didn't even know Sakuraba-senpai was here!”

“Those are some nice expressions, Yurika, Satomi Koutarou. I've been waiting for the two of you to make that kind of expression.”

Seeing Koutarou's and Yurika's faces, Maki was satisfied that she had read the situation correctly.

As I thought, this girl is important to Yurika…

Ever since Maki had passed by Harumi on the roof, she had always assumed that Harumi was worth using.

“S-Satomi-kun!!”

“Now, what will you do, Rainbow Yurika, Satomi Koutarou!? Will you attack this girl along with me!?”

“Kuh, Maki-chan, that's unfair!”

Harumi couldn't move on her own because of Maki's magic. Maki was planning on using Harumi as a shield from Yurika's and Koutarou's attacks.

“Koutarou, something’s wrong with this situation.”

“I know!”

Yurika vs Maki

Koutarou and Sanae nodded and glared at Maki.

“…Maki-san, stop it already! Sakuraba-senpai is off limits! Don't involve her in this!”

“I bet she is. That's why I chose her!”

Koutarou didn't know what situation Harumi was in, but he knew that Maki had involved her.

Just what is going on? Isn't it just cosplaying?

For the past half year, Koutarou hadn't doubted that Yurika was only cosplaying. But his opinion was now gradually changing to something he knew nothing of.

Koutarou had only begun feeling that when Harumi appeared in this construction site. When he thought about it again, he couldn't believe that Yurika would involve Harumi. The two got along so well, it wouldn't be wrong to call them best friends, and Yurika was aware of Harumi's weak constitution. He simply couldn't believe that she would have Harumi participate in this cosplay straight from an action movie. And most importantly, Harumi was frightened. Even Koutarou could tell that she wasn't acting.

“Satomi-kun, Nijino-san, what is happening?”

“Just wait, Sakuraba-senpai, I'll be right there!”

“Maki-chan, let Sakuraba-senpai go!”

“This discussion is over. Protect me, Sakuraba Harumi!”

“Kyaaaa! W-What is!?”

Maki ignored Koutarou and ordered Harumi around. When she did, Harumi began moving, regardless of her own will.

“Yurika, what the hell is happening?”

“I told you, I'm fighting with Maki-chan!”

“Koutarou, what's happening? Yurika is cosplaying, but is that Maki girl a real magician?”

“Based on what's happening, that seems to be—”

“Stone Rain – Mode – Effective Time – Twice!”

“Satomi-san, here she comes! Don't sit still!”

“Waaaaaah!”

“Kyaaaaa!”

Koutarou began screaming in the middle of his sentence. Stones lying around the construction site floated up into the air and began raining down on them. That was Maki-chan's spell, but as the stones began raining down, Yurika readied her cane and shouted.

“Quick Cast – Force Field!!”

“Ow, owowow, wait, what?”

The stone rain striking Koutarou's body stopped all of a sudden. As Koutarou cautiously looked up, he could see a barrier of yellow light, deflecting the stones.

“What is going on?”

“I don't know either…”

Not understanding the situation, Koutarou turned to look towards Yurika, who was holding her cane above her head. A yellow light was pouring out from her cane, and that light spread out like an umbrella, creating the yellow barrier.

Yurika vs Maki

“Yurika, you…”

“Are you okay, Satomi-san?”

Yurika had also been hit by rocks and there were wounds bleeding slightly on her head and exposed limbs. But Yurika showed no signs of caring about her wounds as she smiled at Koutarou.

“D-Did you just use… magic?”

Even Koutarou could understand when the stones raining down on him had been blocked. Yurika really could use magic.

“That's what I've told you from the very start!”

As Yurika said that, tears appeared in the corners of her eyes.

Which means that the thing I saw when we first met wasn't some tool or a trick, it was all real…

The moment that Yurika had waited for, for over half a year happened, Koutarou finally realized the truth.

“Got you!”

The next moment, the stone rain stopped and Maki appeared under the umbrella of light. Maki's stone rain wasn't just an attack; it also served to conceal her next move. Her limbs were enveloped in a red light.

“Oh no!”

They were energy bolts, set to go off when they came in contact with something. Maki was planning strike Yurika with an energy bolt infused magical attack.

“It's okay, don't worry, Yurika!”

“Tsk, Satomi Koutarou!?”

However, Maki's attack did not connect with Yurika. Before it reached her, Koutarou had gotten in between them and grabbed Maki's arm, deflecting her attack. He had no idea what to do when in a fight with a magic user, but a fist fight was his specialty.

“Satomi-san!?”

“I'm okay!”

Koutarou grabbed Maki's wrists and pulled her away from Yurika with all of his might.

“This man, again!?”

At the same time, the red light vanished from her hands. The white light Koutarou emitted had erased it.

“In that case!”

While both of her wrists were caught, Maki threw a kick with her right leg. At this distance it shouldn't be possible to avoid. And the red light around her legs was still there.

“Hissatsu! Sanae-chan shield!!”

However, even Maki's deadly kick was blocked.

“Are you okay, Koutarou!?”

“You saved me!”

Yurika vs Maki

Sanae had blocked the attack by using her poltergeist phenomenon to throw Maki's leg back. Colliding with Sanae's telekinetic power, the energy was used up and the red light on her right leg vanished.

“Tsk, pesky ghost!”

Maki used the moment from her reflected kick to free herself from Koutarou. And as a parting gift, she spun around and kicked with her left leg.

“Woah!?”

Having lost balance when Maki broke free, Koutarou had no way of avoiding Maki's kick. And it looked like he was about to suffer a direct hit.

“Snare Trap!”

However, just before the kick could hit Koutarou, the soil around Maki's footing began rising up, throwing her off balance. The reason for that was the basic magic that Yurika had used in the heat of the moment. But it had more than enough power to stop the roundhouse kick.

“Good job, Yurika!”

“Tsk, as I thought three vs. one is impossible! Energy Release!”

Maki released the magical red light still surrounding her left leg. The released energy left behind a small explosion and a smoke screen.

“Uwah!?”

“As if I'd let you catch me that easily.”

The explosion hurt Maki, but it made Koutarou lose sight of her, and his hand moving to capture her missed.

“Sanae-chan Psychogun!”

Coming up with an idea after seeing the stone rain from before, Sanae used her poltergeist to manipulate a stone and aimed for Maki. The stone chased after Maki with the speed of a bullet.

“Nice team work, but-!”

However, Harumi was standing still in the direction Maki had run off to. Maki ran up behind Harumi and put her in between her and the stone.

“Kyaaaa!”

Seeing the stone closing in, Harumi let out a scream.

“Sanae-chan!”

“Ah, that was close!”

Sanae hurriedly changed the stone’s direction away from Harumi.

After brushing up to Harumi's bangs, it flew straight up into the sky.

“Hey, using Harumi as a shield is unfair!”

“Say whatever you'd like. I'll do whatever it takes to win against three unfair people ganging up on me.”

“That's rude! Teaming up is a privilege for heroes of justice!”

“Sanae-chan, stop saying such stupid things.”

“S-Sorry.”

Yurika vs Maki

After scolding Sanae, Koutarou quickly turned back towards Maki. She appeared from behind Harumi once more.

On top of the fact that Yurika really can use magic, it seems like Maki-san being an enemy is also true. And someone who would use Sakuraba-senpai as a human shield definitely can't be a good guy. I see… So they really did come; Yurika's enemy, the evil magical girls…

If Yurika wasn't a cosplayer but really a magical girl, it would mean that Koutarou and the others had ignored the threat of evil magical girls for over half a year.

“S-Satomi-kun, Nijino-san, j-just what is happening?”

“What's wrong? Aren't you going to attack?”

Harumi was scared by the mysterious situation, and Maki was fearlessly provoking Koutarou and the others, but they couldn't do anything. That was because they understood that Maki would use Harumi as a shield. Koutarou spent some time glaring at Maki before he called out Yurika's name.

“Yurika.”

“Yes.”

“You're a magical girl, right?”

Yurika felt ecstatic when she heard Koutarou say those words. She couldn't help but feel happy that she had finally been able to convey the truth. But Yurika suppressed her feelings and responded with a nod.

“Yes. I'm the magical girl of love and courage ☆ Rainbow Yurika.”

“Then back me up.”

“Satomi-san, what are you planning on doing!?”

Yurika held her breath when she heard what Koutarou had said.

“I'm charging in.”

“That's unreasonable!”

“If Maki-san is going to use Sakuraba-senpai as a shield, our only option is to close in and turn it into a brawl. You might be a magical girl, but you're no good in fist fights. Besides…”

Koutarou was trying to say something, but stopped halfway through.

“Besides, what?”

“…While I'm in there, can you do something about Sakuraba-senpai?”

Koutarou responded with an answer different from what he first been about to say. Besides, you can't punch Sakuraba-senpai. That's what Koutarou had been about to say. In the worst case scenario, they might need to knock Harumi out in order to take her back. However, this timid and incredibly gentle magical girl would not let him do that.

“I got it. I'll try it.”

“Please do.”

Koutarou nodded at Yurika and turned back towards Maki.

“Maki-san, could you give Sakuraba-senpai back to us?”

“A foolish question. I'll release this girl once I've beaten all of you.”

Yurika vs Maki

Is he aiming for a hand to hand fight, or will he try to save Sakuraba Harumi first? In that case, should I use her to threaten them? But if I lose my hostage, it'll turn into a three on one again… In that case!

Maki readied her cane and began incanting her spell.

“Blast Fireball – Modi—”

A huge fireball about one meter in diameter appeared by the tip of her cane.

“Koutarou, this is bad.”

“Let's go, Yurika!”

“Yes!”

Koutarou began sprinting towards Maki at the same time that she started her incantation. Sanae kept a slight distance to him as she followed. Against someone that used ranged weapons, all three of them standing clumped up would just make them a target. They needed to create a distance between them and Yurika who was going to use her magic to cover them.

“—fier – High Concentration.”

Once Maki finished her incantation, the fireball began shrinking. In exchange, the temperature of the flames grew rapidly. The flames turned from red to white as it shrunk to the size of a baseball.

“Satomi-san, watch out for that fireball! I can't block a direct hit from that, even with my magic!”

“I got it!”

The moment after Yurika's warning, Koutarou's and Sanae's bodies were enveloped in a yellow light. It was a defensive spell that Yurika had cast.

“Oh, that's quite alright.”

Maki smiled at Koutarou and the others. However, it was a smile only by form; the smile didn't have a hint of kindness in it.

“I have no plan on shooting it at you.”

“What!?”

“What's that supposed to mean!”

Leering at her confused opponents, Maki pointed her cane at her target.

“…Eh?”

Her target was at a diagonal behind her, Sakuraba Harumi. The next moment, the fireball left her cane and started flying towards Harumi.

“What, you’re aiming for Sakuraba-senpai!?”

“Koutarou, Harumi is going to be killed!”

The fireball had already been fired, so there was nothing Koutarou and Sanae could do. Even if they defeated Maki, it wouldn't save Harumi.

“Kyaaaaaa!”

Seeing the fireball coming flying towards her, Harumi let out a scream. Clueless to the situation and unable to move her body, there was nothing she could do. She had no way to defend herself from the flame flying towards her.

Sakuraba-senpai!!

Yurika vs Maki

“Cancel.”

In this crisis, the only one who could do something was Yurika. She cancelled the magic she was casting and started on a different incantation.

“Recall – Precast – Teleport!”

Teleportation magic. Normally it required a long to cast and prepare, so Yurika had called out and used an incantation she had prepared beforehand. It was her one-time use ace magic. The moment she finished her incantation she vanished from where she stood, and appeared in front of Harumi.

“Koutarou, Yurika is-!”

“Yurika!? What are you doing!?”

Sanae was amazed that Yurika had teleported. But Koutarou was more worried about where she had appeared then. Yurika brandished her cane and started an incantation.

“As long as it's not a direct hit, this should be able to protect you…”

Yurika smiled as she said that. At the same time, her spell activated and a yellow light enveloped Harumi.

“Nijino-san, what are you—”

“I'll leave the rest to you, Satomi-san.”

The next moment, the fireball crashed into Yurika's body.

Part 9

Yurika was well aware that this was Maki's trap. She wouldn't do something like throwing away her ace up her sleeve, her hostage. But even though she knew, Yurika had to protect Harumi. The unthinkable might have happened.

“Yurikaaaaaa!”

“Nijino-san!”

“Yurika, why would you!?”

The moment the fireball hit Yurika, the energy inside of it was released all at once. The massive energy burned through the defensive magic protecting Yurika and scorched her. In the sea of flames, Yurika's lifeless body collapsed to the ground.

Because of Yurika's actions, Harumi was unharmed. Some of the flames that burned Yurika reached Harumi, but they had no effect because of the defensive spell she had cast.

“As I thought, this was the simplest way of doing it.”

Maki coldly stared at Yurika who laid collapsed on the soil.

That's right. That's Rainbow Heart's limit. You have too much to protect. Because of that you can't protect anything…

However, for a moment there also pity in her glance.

“Satomi-kun! Nijino-san, Nijino-san is!!”

Still unable to move, Harumi screamed out. She was at a loss after seeing Yurika collapsing after protecting him.

“Yurika! Hey, Yurika!”

Koutarou ran up to Yurika and held her up. She hadn't died because of her defensive spell, but she had suffered major damage and lost consciousness.

“She's okay… right?”

Sanae timidly looked at Yurika. Sanae could see Yurika's spiritual energy but she had weakened to the point where Sanae began to worry.

“As if something like this would kill her.”

Koutarou trembled with anger as he held Yurika. However, that anger was not aimed at Maki, but at himself.

Why didn't I believe her for over half a year!? This wouldn't have happened if I had only believed in her!

Because he hadn't believed in Yurika, he had ignored the threat of the evil magical girls for over half a year. If he had believed her, they could have at the very least come up with some plans. That way, Yurika might not have collapsed like this. Koutarou couldn't forgive himself. He should have believed what Yurika had told him, even if it was just a small portion of it. That intense rage and regret boiled inside of him.

“Satomi-kun…”

At this point, Harumi began to faintly understand the situation. Yurika wasn't a cosplayer, but something different. She didn't know what she had seen was magic or not, but she knew that Yurika was fighting a battle with lives at stake.

“Don't blame yourself, Satomi-kun.”

Yurika vs Maki

“But, if I had believed her, this wouldn't have happened!”

That said, normally nobody would believe someone they had first met talking about magic, magical girls and that enemies were coming.

“There's no need to worry. All of you will soon meet the same fate as Yurika.”

“Maki-san!!”

Brandishing her cane, Maki approached Koutarou and the others.

So she's planning on finishing off Yurika.

Seeing that, Koutarou laid Yurika down on the ground and stepped forward, to protect her and Harumi.

“I won't let you touch Yurika.”

“If you win, that is…”

There's no need to go all out… as long as I can get a grasp of this man’s true strength…

Maki was planning on ascertaining Koutarou's abilities. She wasn't planning on defeating an opponent she knew nothing about, right away.

“That's why I'll be the winner!”

And if I can't protect Yurika, I really will be an idiot!!

The moment Koutarou shouted, a loud shrill sound, similar to hitting two light metal pieces hitting each other, rang out and a pure-white light lit up the area.

“What!?”

“You're finally going all out, are you!?”

Between Koutarou and Harumi, right by the area where Yurika was lying, an orb of white light appeared. The orb of light was roughly a meter in diameter and it lit up the area as it floated above Yurika. As the orb lit Yurika up, her expression loosened. The light was healing the critically wounded Yurika, just like it had with Harumi in the past.

“What's going on!?”

“Koutarou, this is that light!”

This light, it's protecting us again!?

Koutarou had simply been surprised by the light appearing, but Sanae was surprised that she recognized it. In the past it had lit up a sword and protected Theia, it had also lit up charms and protected Sanae herself as well. Sanae felt that this light was the same as back then.

While Koutarou and Sanae were surprised by the suddenly appearing light, Harumi called out to Koutarou.

“Koutarou-sama…”

“Sakuraba-senpai!?”

When Koutarou looked at Harumi, he noticed that she was different from normal. Her hair color glowed in a silver light and on her forehead was a crest that resembled a sword. Her appearance seemed divine; words like shrine maiden or holy woman would work as a description.

“W-What's with that appearance…!?”

“There's no time to explain.”

Yurika vs Maki

While shaking her head, Harumi for some reason had a very gentle glance. It was almost as if she was meeting someone nostalgic she hadn't seen for a long time. Like she had found someone she had been searching after for a long time.

“If I use this power that healed Yurika to call out your sword…”

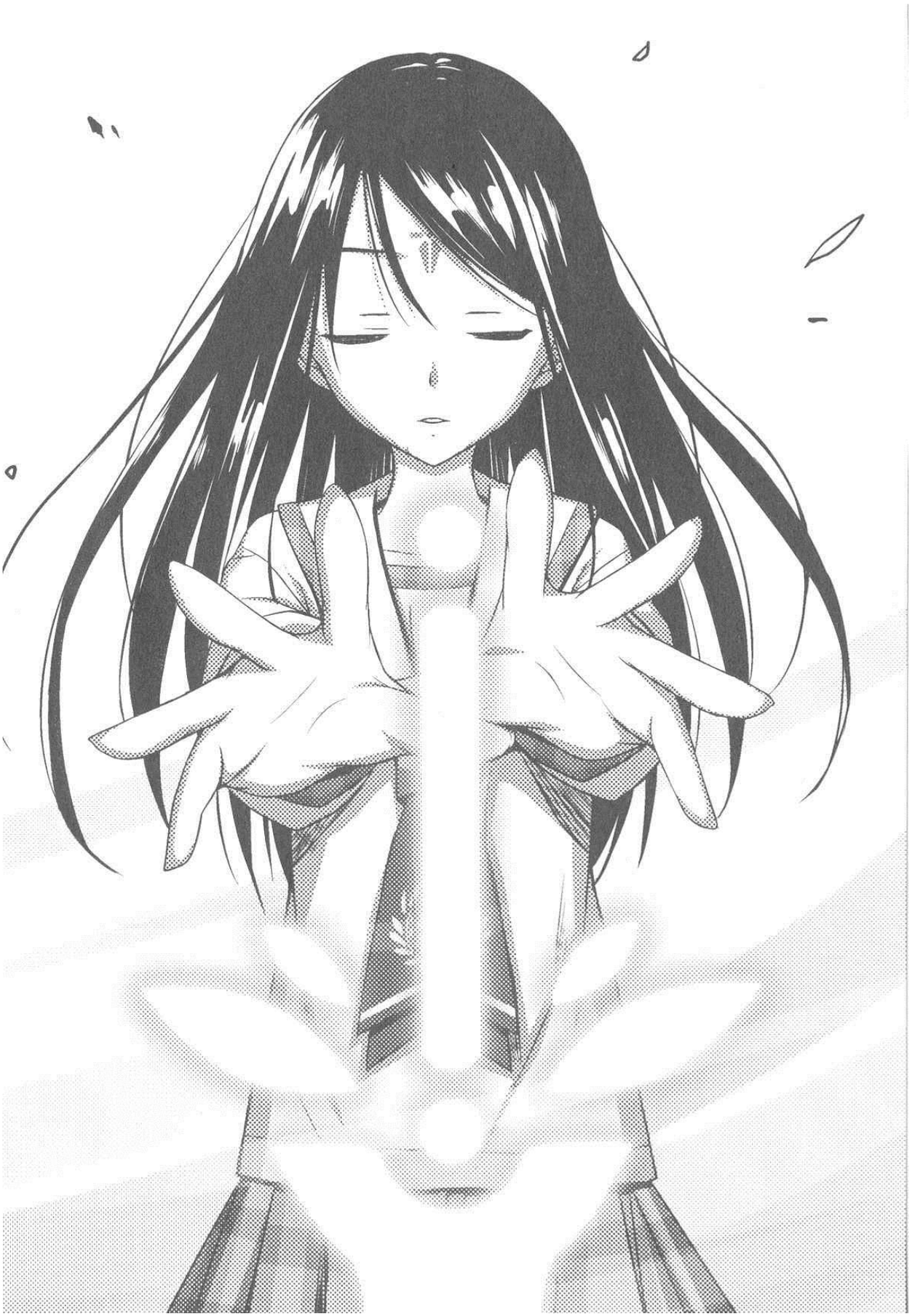
As Harumi said that, she reached her hands out towards the glowing orb. And as she held her palms towards the orb, she closed her eyes.

Sakuraba Harumi escaped the effects of my magic!? She dispelled it!? With that much magic power, it's obvious she did!

Maki couldn't hide her surprise when she saw that Harumi could move freely.

On top of that she can use magic too!? She's trying to control the light that Satomi Koutarou summoned!

Yurika vs Maki



What surprised her even more was that Harumi began manipulating the light that had appeared.

“Sakuraba-senpai, just what are you!?”

“… It's okay, your fate is not to die here.”

When Harumi held out her hands, the orb of light began to contract. It was almost the same as when Maki had shrunk the fireball. However, unlike before, the white light began forming into the shape of a sword.

“Koutarou-sama, please use this. I couldn't summon the real one, but this is without a doubt your sword.”

“Koutarou, this sword has amazing powers!? What's going on!? It's overflowing with so much power that I can barely see!”

Sanae was able to sense the power the sword was emitting. The white light flowing out of the sword was almost like a gale blowing. Sanae could even feel the power spraying onto her skin. And the too strong power kept Sanae from being able to see the outline of the sword.

“I understand!”

I don't get what's going on, but there's no time to hesitate!

Koutarou took the sword of light without any hesitation. The sword was simply a mass of light, but it felt exactly the same as the sword he had borrowed from Theia. But despite sword having terrific power, Koutarou strangely enough felt no worry holding it. Instead, he felt gentleness and warmth.

“Koutarou-sama…”

The warmth felt very similar to the warmth he felt from Harumi's smile.

“May fortune be with you…”

Sakuraba-senpai!?”

After Koutarou had taken the sword he looked back at Harumi, only to see her falling slowly towards the ground. At the same time, her hair color returned to normal, and the sword crest on her forehead vanished.

“It's okay, it seems like she's only sleeping.”

Sanae approached Harumi and checked her breathing and spiritual energy. She didn't notice anything irregular about either.

“I see…”

Feeling relieved, Koutarou grasped his sword and turned towards Maki. He was worried about Harumi, but if he forgot about Maki something terrible would happen.

“Color me surprised. So that's your true powers…”

Maki showed no signs of attacking; as she had said, she looked surprised.

“I'm surprised too.”

Koutarou didn't understand what was going on. Starting with Yurika being a magical girl, her enemy, Maki's, appearance and a fight between these two magical girls. And then when Yurika had collapsed when protecting Harumi, a white light appeared and Harumi had changed that into a sword. This year had been a mess for Koutarou, but today was the worst by far.

“What are you, a monster…?”

Yurika vs Maki

Maki swallowed when she saw that sword in Koutarou's hand. Since she used magic, she knew very well that the power residing in that sword was massive. Enough power to shake the entirety of the construction site was overflowing from that sword.

I'll give it a try…

Maki braced herself and pointed her cane towards Koutarou.

“Here I come, Satomi Koutarou!”

“Sanae, I'll leave Yurika and Sakuraba-senpai to you!”

“I got it!”

Koutarou readied his sword and took a Forthorthe-styled stance. It was the old school sword fighting style that Theia had beaten into Koutarou on a daily basis.

“Double Cast – Force Field, Thunder Lance!!”

As expected, the one who made the first move was Maki who had ranged attacks. She chanted spells in rapid succession, creating a shield to protect her and summoning a powerful lightning spear.

“Take this!”

Maki threw the electric spear towards Koutarou who was closing in. Her target was his sword since long things had an easier time attracting lightning.

“Ooooooo!!”

Seeing that, Koutarou roared as he charged. In response to his roar, light began overflowing from the sword. As the lightning spear came in contact with the light, it vanished, as if there was nothing there to begin with.

“What!?”

“Daaaaaaaaaaaa!!”

Koutarou swung his sword down towards a surprised Maki.

“Tsk!”

Maki bent her body over and barely managed to dodge the edge of the sword, but since the sword touched her, her protective spell vanished.

“What the hell is this!?”

To think he was this strong! At this rate I won't stand a chance! The matchup with my specialty is far too poor!

The light alone being emitted from Koutarou's sword had erased Maki's lightning spear, and the sword simply skimming by her had torn through her magical shield. It was the perfect weapon when dealing with a magician.

“In that case!”

Maki used her momentum from dodging the sword to backflip, and the moment she landed she cast her next spell.

“Quick Cast – Fog Cloud – Modifier – Effective Area – Colossal!!”

“What!?”

Maki casted a spell that created a fog. The effective area was wide, filling up the entirety of the pit in the construction site.

Yurika vs Maki

“What is this!? I can't see anything!”

The created fog was thick and completely blocked Koutarou's vision. On top of that, since the fog was made from magic, not even Sanae could see through it.

“Sanae, you stay there and protect Yurika and Sakuraba-senpai!”

“I got it!”

As Koutarou erased the fog with his sword, little by little, Sanae began being able to see. Koutarou readied his sword and looked around the area.

She's not attacking? Why?

But no matter how long he looked, he couldn't find Maki. There was no surprise attack. As he stayed on guard, the wind scattered the fog. Once the fog had completely vanished, Maki was nowhere to be seen.

Sunshine and Rainbows

Part 1

As the sound of the Math teacher’s chalk tapping against the blackboard continued, Theia stared at Koutarou's seat.

In the end, Koutarou didn't come back…

Despite the fifth period starting, Koutarou hadn’t returned yet, leaving his seat empty.

That's right, the cell phone!

Theia pulled her cell phone out from her pocket. Since Koutarou's number had been registered, she could call him with the press of a button.

But…

But Theia didn't contact Koutarou. Instead, her expression clouded up.

The fifth period just started… and I'm in the middle of class… That's right! I'm in the middle of class so it can't be helped!

Theia made excuses for herself and put her cell phone back in her pocket. In reality, there were several ways for her to call him. She could fake that she was feeling ill and head towards the nurse's office. But Theia couldn't do it. If she called Koutarou herself, she wouldn’t know what to say.

Alright, better continue!

Putting her cell phone down, she turned back towards her notebook on top of her desk. The notebook had been filled up by messy scribbles, all about ideas for the next play. She had prepared her notebook for a new manuscript, but she had just started on it. No proper sentences have even been formed yet; it was simply filled with ideas.

As I thought, if I can't get that scene right, I can't create the others…

That scene was the very last scene of the story: the Blue Knight's and the Silver Princess's parting scene. The fighting had ended and the Silver Princess had become the empress. After seeing it through, the Blue Knight left on his own, even though he was aware that the Silver Princess loved him.

According to historians, the Blue Knight simply returned to his homeland where his family waited, or he feared that his existence could trigger an internal power struggle. Thus, he had left the Silver Princess. There was also a theory that he might have been assassinated. The Blue Knight didn't appear in history after that; the truth could only be found 2,000 years ago. So while the parting scene was a mystery, it was also the climax of a grand love story. As such, it was beloved by the people of Forthorthe, in both the present and the past.

It was a well-known fact that the Silver Princess loved the Blue Knight… but what about the Blue Knight?

Of course, Theia was the same. Because of the way she felt for the Blue Knight, this scene was the starting point, and she was also planning on writing the remaining scenes to make this final scene stand out. Theia held her pen tightly in her hand, but she still couldn't decide what to do.

If he does love her, they would at least kiss…

Kiss. When Theia thought of that word, she imagined a man and woman kissing. But that man and woman weren't the Blue Knight and the Silver Princess, but a somewhat dimwitted young boy and a girl with beautiful golden hair.

A kiss, huh…

Sunshine and Rainbows

Theia played with her fantasy for a while as the sound of the chalk continued ringing out with a fast tempo. However, Theia's heartbeat was even faster.

Ah!!

After living in a dream world for several seconds, Theia returned to her senses. As her beautiful hair shook back and forth, her face turned bright red.

No, no. The Blue Knight and the Silver Princess are the ones who are supposed to kiss! W-Why would I k-kiss that ill-mannered boy!?

While Theia's face turned red in embarrassment, she hurriedly tried to cross over the 'kiss' idea. But her hand stopped after drawing the first line.

B-But, since I'm his acting instructor, I'll… I-I'll… kiss… with him… like lovers do. A kiss that stops your breath, d-deep kisses… training… countless… countless times…

“F-Fuaaaaaa…”

“Your highness?”

At that point, Theia collapsed on her desk. Her face was beet red; she had passed out because her brain had overheated.

“Your highness, what's wrong?”

“Hah… Ahh… be, be more… gentle with your kisses…”

Worried, Ruth who had been sitting next to her shook Theia's body, but Theia showed no reaction and kept mumbling senseless words.

“Ruth-chan, it's okay Ho-! According to our observation, she has just passed out after overusing her head Ho-!”

“If you wait a moment she'll recover Ho-! So don't worry Ho-!”

“I see… thank god…”

Karama and Korama had approached Ruth while camouflaged. Ruth let out a sigh of relief after hearing Karama's and Korama's report.

“Why why did Theia-chan faint Ho-?”

“I want to know Ho-! We need to examine and prevent it Ho-!”

The two haniwas started climbing up Theia's desk. The appearance of two haniwas clinging onto the desk's legs and climbing up was very adorable, but since they were hidden from sight, nobody would take note of it.

“There seems to be a lot of scribbles Ho-!”

“The notebook is completely black Ho-!”

“Her highness has been very busy creating a script for the new play.”

“Ho-! This is serious Ho-!”

“HoHo-! We can't prevent this Ho-! Good luck, Theia-chan.”

The haniwas looked at Theia with admiration, their empty eyes looking gentle.

“T-Training… it's training so… one more time…”

“Karama, Korama, leave her be.”

“Ho-, got it Ho-. Nee-san.”

Sunshine and Rainbows

“Good night Ho-, Theia-chan. Rest well Ho-!”

Having been scolded by Kiriha, Karama and Korama obediently returned to Kiriha's desk. The two haniwas looked adorable as they skipped towards Kiriha, but even this time, no one could see them. The same was true for their master, Kiriha. But in her case, it wasn't that she couldn't see their appearance, it was because she was looking through the window.

“But what really happened to Koutarou and Yurika? At this rate the fifth period will end…”

Kiriha had been watching the front gate for a while now. But neither Koutarou nor Yurika had appeared as the clock kept ticking away.

“I just hope something strange hasn't happened…”

Kiriha was planning on calling Koutarou once the class ended. Unlike Theia who had fainted, it was not a big deal for Kiriha.

Part 2

Around the time Theia passed out in the classroom, Koutarou was still at the construction site. Even after Maki had vanished, Koutarou and Sanae were unable to leave. The reason for that was because both Yurika and Harumi were unconscious. The only thing Koutarou could do was carry them to a prefabricated hut on the site.

“How'd the call go?”

“No good. I got no reception outside.”

Koutarou wanted to get in contact with Theia and the others for to help treat Yurika. When it came to healing, the Blue Knight's treatment devices were superior to a hospital’s. He also wanted to get in contact with them to deal with Maki.

If they heard that a new opponent had appeared, neither Theia nor Kiriha would be able sit still. But for some reason, his cell phone couldn't get a signal.

“In that case, should I go to school and call them over?”

Since Sanae was a ghost, she was able to fly directly to the school. With the phone out of the question, it was the fastest way there was.

“Could you? I can't move from here.”

Since Koutarou couldn't leave Yurika and Harumi on their own, he quickly accepted Sanae's proposal.

“I got it. Just wait Koutarou, I'll go call them right away.”

“Yeah, I'm counting on you, Sanae.”

“Yeah♪”

Having Koutarou ask her, Sanae cheerfully nodded and passed through the roof.

“Huh?”

As Sanae was flying towards the school, she could feel that her body had become oddly heavy.

“That's weird… I wonder what it is?”

It felt like she had a rubber string attached to her that was pulling her back. And the further she travelled from the prefabricated hut that Koutarou was in, the stronger it pulled on her.

“Geez, what is this… I don't know what it is, but don't get in my way, I'm in a hurry.”

Sanae couldn't stop here. Right now she had an important job she had gotten from Koutarou. If she completed it, he was sure to praise her. Because of that, Sanae increased her speed to fight against the power pulling her.

“Let me go, Koutarou is waiting!! Eh, Huh!? It disappeared!?”

Just as the power pulling her back was about to become a real problem, it vanished. It was almost like a rubber string stretched too far, and it sent Sanae rotating through the sky.

“Ohoho… what was that…?”

After looking around, she tilted her head as she flew upside down. Sanae had never experienced that before.

“Well, I returned to normal, so who cares.”

However, after returning to normal, Sanae quickly dismissed it and began flying once more. She normally never pondered on anything anyways, and she wanted to help Koutarou.

“To the school, I gotta hurry.”

In reality, what had been pulling her back had been her own feelings. At first, she had been bound to room 106, however as time passed she had changed to being bound to Koutarou instead. The one that had severed that bond were her own feelings as well; her feelings of wanting to help him had overpowered her feelings of wanting be by his side.

“Alright, I'll give it my all!”

Having her bond changed from the room to Koutarou reflected how she had grown very attached to him.

Harumi opened her eyes shortly after Sanae had left.

“H-Huh… I…”

“Sakuraba-senpai, are you okay?”

“…Koutarou-sama…?”

And what she had been looking after for the past 2,000 years—

“Ah… Uhm, I…”

Harumi snapped out of her dazed state. She recalled what happened before she fainted.

“T-That's right, Nijino-san. Is Nijino-san okay!?”

Harumi jumped up. She then hurriedly looked around and noticed a wounded Yurika lying next to her.

“Nijino-san, Nijino-san!”

Tears began forming in Harumi's eyes as she shook Yurika. She knew that Yurika had protected her so she was in a frenzy. As she thought that Yurika might have died for her, she couldn't calm herself down.

“Calm down, Sakuraba-senpai.”

“But, Satomi-kun! Nijino-san is… Nijino-san is!”

“It's okay, she's just unconscious.”

Koutarou hugged Harumi and made her stop shaking Yurika.

“Let go, let me go!”

However, Harumi tried to shake Koutarou off. She was just that worried about Yurika.

“I called for help just now. Yurika will be fine.”

“…Really?”

After several attempts, Koutarou was finally able to persuade Harumi, and she stopped shaking Yurika. She then slowly turned towards him.

“Yes. She'll be treated shortly.”

“T-Thank god…”

Harumi let out a large sigh of relief and relaxed.

I'm sorry, Sakuraba-senpai…

In reality, Koutarou didn't really have a full grasp of Yurika's injuries. But he knew that if he didn't say that, Harumi wouldn't calm down.

“I was so worried that something would happen to Nijino-san… thank god…”

Sunshine and Rainbows

Harumi wiped her tears away and looked up at Koutarou. At that moment, she was smiling through her tears. She felt deeply relieved and happy.

“So, are you okay, Sakuraba-senpai?”

“Me…?”

As Koutarou said that, Harumi finally realized the situation she was in.

“Ah, I-I…”

Koutarou was embracing her, and his face was really close. In that situation, she couldn't remain calm.

“Ah, I-I-I'm fine, i-i-it's nothing.”

“Is that so? Your face is red though.”

Noticing that Harumi seemed a bit off, he was worried that she might have caught a fever, and put his hand on her forehead.

“It doesn't… seem like you have a fever.”

“I-I-I'm fine!”

Harumi thrust Koutarou away and escaped from his arms.

Ah, right…

Seeing Harumi like that, Koutarou realized that she was embarrassed.

“I'm sorry, Sakuraba-senpai.”

Koutarou began blushing as well and apologized.

“N-No…”

Harumi shook her head as she stared down on the ground.

Thank god… Satomi-san let go… if that had continued, I might have said something amazing…

If it was with someone she hated, Harumi wouldn't have been this upset. The reason for that was obviously Koutarou.

“So, about before, Sakuraba-senpai.”

“Ah, t-that's right, what happened after that?”

As if to run, Koutarou changed the topic. Harumi followed along, and the strange atmosphere around them vanished.

“I can't really remember what happened after Nijino-san collapsed…”

“Eh!? You don't remember!?”

“Yes… did something happen?”

Harumi remembered everything up until when Yurika protected her from the fireball, and Koutarou had held her up. Because of that, she found it strange that Koutarou was so surprised.

“N-No, if you don't remember, then…”

Sakuraba-senpai doesn't remember anything? Then what was…?

Harumi had completely forgotten about handing over the glowing sword to Koutarou.

Now that I think about it, that sword vanished alongside Maki… Just what is happening?

Koutarou felt confused about the strange, unimaginable things happening around him.

Sunshine and Rainbows

“N, Mmm…”

It was around that time that Yurika woke up.

Part 3

“Yurika!”

“Nijino-san!”

As Yurika opened her eyes, she saw Koutarou and Harumi.

“…Satomi-shan… Shakuraba-senpai…”

“Are you okay, Yurika!?”

The two of them were smiling, but there were tears in their eyes.

“Why are you crying…?”

“I'm not crying, you idiot!”

“It's because you woke up, Nijino-san.”

Koutarou shouted and Harumi cried. As she heard their voices, she remembered what had happened before she collapsed.

She remembered her fight with Maki, that Koutarou and Harumi had appeared in the middle of it and that she had taken a fireball for Harumi. Her mind gradually cleared and she tried to get up.

“Yurika, don't push yourself! Stay down!”

“I can't, do that.”

Koutarou tried to lay Yurika back down, but she shook her head. Having no other option, Koutarou supported her body as she got up.

“Satomi-san, what about Maki-chan? What happened with Maki?”

“After you passed out, we had a small skirmish with Maki before she vanished.”

“What about Sanae-chan? I can't see her around…”

“My cell phone can't get a signal so she's out calling for help.”

“I see… the cell phone not getting a signal is because of our magic.”

“Really?”

As Yurika stood up thanks to Koutarou's support, she took a deep breath. As expected she had burns and bruises all over her body.

“Hah… Ahh… Before we started fighting, we set up a barrier to ward off people. Within that barrier, all communications are jammed.”

The barrier that Yurika and Maki had set up before the battle not only kept people away, but it also prevented people on the inside from reporting what was going to those outside. The barrier blocked sound, visual information and electromagnetic waves. As a result, cell phones lost their reception.

“I don't know anything about magic, but is your body okay, Nijino-san?”

To Harumi, Yurika's health was more important than enemies or magic. She grabbed Yurika's hand with both of hers and looked at her with a worried stare.

“I'm alright. I'm the magical girl of love and courage after all.”

“…Then, that's fine…”

Yurika smiled and nodded, but Harumi couldn't relax as she looked at Yurika covered in wounds.

Sunshine and Rainbows

“So what are you going to do now, Yurika?”

She might have been covered in wounds, but she had still gotten up. Koutarou understood that was because she had something she had to do.

“I'm going after Maki-chan.”

“You can't go after her in that state!”

Harumi shook her head and objected. She didn't want Yurika to move with her injuries.

“Even then, I need to go. There's no time to spare.”

“Chasing after her or not, do you even know where Maki-san is?”

“Yes. She's headed to room 106, I'm sure of it.”

“At our place? Why would… ah, that's right, you said—”

“Yes. Maki-chan is after the magic power in room 106.”

Yurika had said the same thing ever since they first met. One day the evil magical girls would appear, targeting the magic power in room 106.

“That's why I need to go now, or something terrible will happen.”

Yurika stood up as she said that.

“Kuh…”

Yurika's face warped with pain and broke out into a cold sweat as she stood up.

This is the real Yurika… no, this is a real magical girl…

Koutarou understood the weight of Yurika's duty. She worried about her duty more than her body or life.

In that case…

Koutarou made up his mind.

“Yurika, I'll bring you home.”

As he said that, Koutarou turned his back towards Yurika and kneeled. He was planning on carrying Yurika all the way to room 106.

“Is that really okay, Satomi-san?”

Taking into account everything that had happened up until today, she couldn't believe his offer.

“What does it matter? This is the only way to protect room 106, right?”

“T-That's true, but…”

Koutarou wasn't just offering out of good will, but because of everything that had happened up until today. He felt that he had an obligation to help Yurika since he hadn't believed her until now. He also wanted to help his roommate of over half a year.

“That's absurd!! If Nijino-san keeps fighting in that state, something really will happen to her!”

However, Harumi was still set on stopping them. She wanted to stop her best friend no matter what.

“If I leave her be, something will happen to this city or the magical country.”

But Yurika had something she had to protect at any cost. She had made a promise to her predecessor, Rainbow Nana. She had spent over half a year in this city. Therefore, Yurika couldn't just stand down.

“Get on, Yurika.”

“Yes.”

Yurika's face was still warped with pain, but she didn't hesitate to push her body onto Koutarou's back. As she did, Koutarou stood up.

“Satomi-kun, Nijino-san, you really can't go!”

“This is dangerous, so go back to school please, Sakuraba-senpai.”

“Satomi-kun!?”

Harumi was normally withdrawn and didn't assert herself, but this time she didn't back down.

“No, I won't go back!”

“Sakuraba-senpai!?”

“If you won't stop fighting, I definitely won't go back!”

That was the first time Harumi had said something selfish to Koutarou.

Part 4

Meanwhile, Sanae had reached Kitsushouharukaze High School. She passed through the window straight into class 1-A's classroom and headed straight for Kiriha and the others.

“My cell phone can't reach him either. So either he's turned his cell phone off, or he has no reception.”

“I can't connect to Yurika-chan's cell phone either. Well, in her case, she just might not have paid her operator.”

“Hmm… Just what are the two of them doing…”

“I just hope nothing happened…”

The fifth period had just ended and they were currently having their break. Kiriha and the others had their cell phones out and faced each other. But for some reason, Theia was lying down on her desk.

It was at that time that Sanae arrived.

“Everyone, there's trouble! Come with me, quick!”

“Sanae? Are you the only one back?”

“What about Satomi-sama and Yurika-sama?”

There was a big difference in excitement as Sanae came flying towards Kiriha and the others. The group just assumed that Yurika had overslept or was playing around.

“That's it! Koutarou and Yurika are in trouble!”

Sanae, who was the only one who knew what had happened, pointed at Ruth and continued talking. She was determined to bring everyone to where Koutarou was as soon as possible.

“That doesn't sound very calm.”

“What kind of trouble?”

“It's a pain to explain, just hurry up and follow me! Just as Yurika said, a new enemy after our room appeared!”

“What!?”

Hearing that Koutarou was in danger, Theia kicked her chair away and stood up.

“Is Koutarou alright!? How about it!?”

Theia rushed up to Sanae and questioned her. After hearing that an enemy had appeared, Theia worried about Koutarou's safety first of all. At that point, the two of them felt the same way.

“Koutarou is okay, but Yurika is hurt! So hurry up, we have to go!”

Sanae grabbed Theia's arm and forcibly pulled her towards the exit.

“Alright, lead the way.”

Theia soon began moving on her own. She couldn't say that she wanted to go together with Koutarou, but if he was in danger, she would go to help him. It was the lord's duty to save their vassal after all.

“Your highness, I will accompany you.”

“I understand the situation. I can't ignore an enemy after room 106. I will come too.”

“I have a bad feeling, so I'll come too. I don't want my residents to be in any trouble.”

Ruth, Kiriha and Shizuka followed suit. The five of them then encountered Kenji who had just entered the classroom.

“Oh? Theia-san and company, where are you headed?”

“Just some unfinished business. Let the teacher know we’re leaving early.”

“I don't mind, but… is there any trouble?”

Maki and Yurika were gone, Koutarou had left to pick up something he had forgotten and hadn't come back. On top of that, Theia, Ruth, Kiriha and Shizuka were leaving early. Anyone would notice something was happening.

“Mackenzie-kun, according to Yurika-chan's explanation, an evil magical girl has appeared and she's in trouble.”

“I see. Then take your time.”

After Shizuka's short explanation, Kenji smiled and gave way. The five of them jumped out of the classroom and ran down the stairs leading to the entrance.

“… I've been thinking.”

“About what?”

“Normally, you won't believe it, right?”

“Probably not.”

“It's a magical girl after all…”

“Common sense gets in the way.”

Like that, the five of them left the school and headed towards Koutarou's rescue.

Part 5

It's warm…

That's what Yurika thought as she was shaken by Koutarou's back as he ran. His back was large, and when she pushed her cheek against his back, she could feel his warmth.

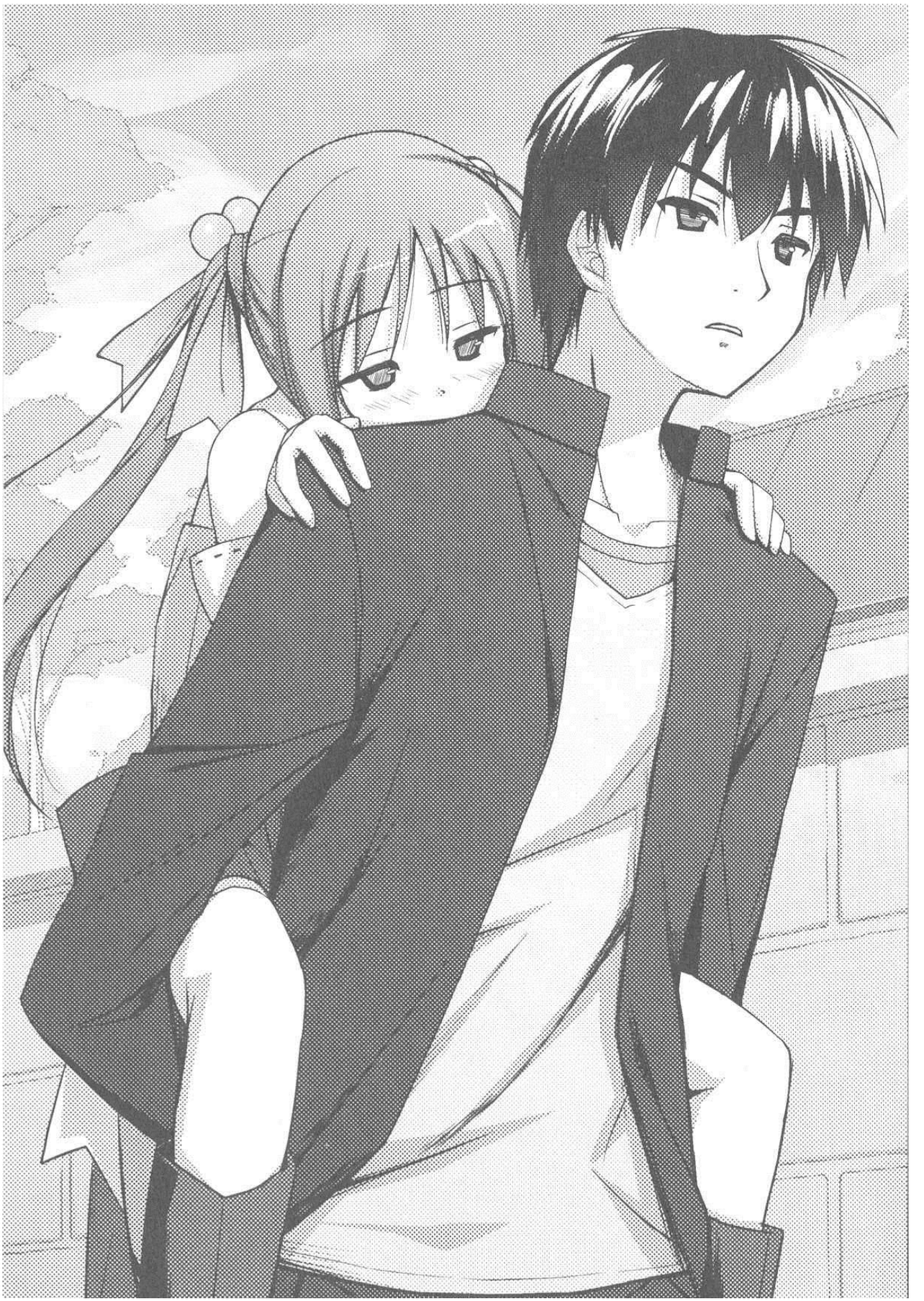
I can understand why Sanae-chan always does this…

Ever since Yurika had become a magical girl, she had, strictly speaking, been alone. Nobody fought alongside her, or even knew of her identity. Although they were together, Koutarou and the others didn't truly understand her. However, Koutarou had finally understood, he had finally reached his hand out to her and today, Yurika was no longer alone. She had found someone she could rely on.

I'm a bit jealous at Sanae-chan if she always gets to do this…

Yurika grabbed onto Koutarou even stronger. There was still a way to go until Corona House. She didn't want to become a burden to him.

Sunshine and Rainbows



3

“Hey, Yurika.”

“Yes?”

Noticing that Yurika was moving, he asked about something that had been bothering him.

“Why are you a magical girl? It's not like you were born that way, right?”

He had sort of heard her reason before; Yurika had on several occasions said that someone had once saved her life. But he had never listened to her circumstances. Koutarou used this opportunity to find out.

“…I was born in a normal family, and lived as a normal girl.”

Yurika hesitated for a moment before opening her mouth. She would have easily said those words to get him to believe in her. But now that he did, she began hesitating.

I see, I wasn't being myself…

At this moment, Yurika finally realized how little weight her words actually carried.

“But it seemed like I had potential for magic, and one day a demon attacked.”

That was over a year ago. Yurika, who was a middle schooler at the time, had stayed behind for supplementary lessons, and in the empty schoolhouse a large black beast had appeared and attacked her. It was an absurd beast that looked like a lion that had grown bat wings. The beast had appeared to feast on her magical power.

“The one who saved me back then was Nana-san. She was in charge of defending this area.”

“Nana… that's the name of your savior, right?”

“Yes. If Nana-san hadn't appeared, I think that beast would have eaten me alive.”

“I see.”

“So that happened…”

Harumi who was running next to Koutarou, mumbled deep in thought. If Koutarou had run at full speed Harumi probably wouldn't have been able to keep up, but he chose not to because of Yurika's wounds.

“Back then, Nana-san's duty was to teach me how to control my magic power. If I learned how to control my normally overflowing magic power, demons wouldn't come attack me anymore.”

“So, that person taught you how to use magic?”

“Yes. It was all basic magic though…”

Yurika recalled when Nana had transferred into her school to protect her and when she had taught Yurika basic magic to get her to learn how to control her magic power.

“After I learned how to use magic, I began helping Nana-san. Nana-san said she only saved me because of her duty, but to me she was my savior. And if that was her duty, then I wanted to help her with that as much as I could.

“What did you do to help?”

“Since I only knew basic magic, I never helped with fighting.”

Nana had strongly objected when Yurika first proposed to help her. She knew that Yurika had a high potential for magic, and she would surely be able to use advanced magic. But Nana was worried about Yurika's personality. She didn't want Yurika, who was gentle at heart, to fight.

“I was sort of like an assistant.”

But since Yurika was so stubborn about helping, she was allowed to assist her on the condition that she didn't do anything dangerous.

“I would make food or help in investigations. Nana-san is from Folsaria, so she had no papers here, so there was a lot I could help out with.”

Koutarou couldn't see Yurika's face, but he imagined that she was smiling.

“Folsaria? What's that?”

“Folsaria is the name of the magical country. Folsaria the magical kingdom. I hear it's a kingdom without a king.”

Folsaria existed on a different world. Of course, they have no diplomatic relations with Japan, so Nana was technically an illegal immigrant. Because of that, the mere existence of a cooperator like Yurika was a blessing.

“So, that Nana came from there?”

“Yes. Nana-san is one of the arc wizards in Folsaria's army, Rainbow Heart. She's the youngest to have ever obtained the title of Rainbow. She was a genius magical girl.”

“Then why are you fighting, Nijino-san?”

Nana didn't want Yurika to fight, but despite that, Yurika was fighting all alone. It was only obvious that Harumi would have such questions.

“That's…”

Yurika hesitated. Up until that point she had been energetically sharing her story.

“That's because Nana-san lost her magic because of me.”

Yurika's voice was harsh and cold.

“I'll never forget that day, eight months ago. Just like Sakuraba-senpai today, I was taken hostage by Darkness Rainbow.”

“Like me… that's…”

“Yes. Nana-san was seriously injured while protecting me. So in order to defeat Maki-chan and the others, she released all of the magical power in her body.”

The injuries Nana had received when protecting Yurika was worse than what Yurika had gotten today, because all seven from Darkness Rainbow had attacked then. Not even the genius magical girl could defend herself from the seven girls from Darkness Rainbow. Suffering grave injuries and backed into a corner, Nana used her last-resort. She released all of the magical power inside of her to attack the seven girls.

“If you do that, you'll never be able to use magic again. But Nana-san did that to protect me.”

It was similar to a gas tank exploding. If you detonated the magic container inside your body, you'd never be able to recover your magical power. In order to follow through with her responsibilities and protect Yurika, she gave up her life as a magician.

“I see… So that's why you succeeded her role?”

“Yes. This outfit, and that cane originally belonged to Nana-san. I have to fulfil Nana-san's duties in her place.”

It wasn't like Yurika had wanted to become a magical girl, she just wanted to become like Nana.

“Nijino-san…”

Sunshine and Rainbows

Harumi respected Yurika's strong determination. There must have been a big meaning for Yurika to protect Harumi. Feeling that, Harumi felt even more grateful towards her. At the same time, she began to want to grant Yurika's wishes.

“I understand, Nijino-san.”

“…Sakuraba-senpai?”

“I won't tell you to stop any more. Instead, you have to win. I'll help too!”

“Sakuraba-senpai! That's dang—I mean, thank you very much.”

Yurika could feel Harumi's determination. It was the same as hers that day. Because of that, Yurika didn't refuse Harumi's offer.

“… I see… you really are a magical girl…”

Having understood everything, Koutarou looked mysteriously sad. Harumi then noticed his expression.

“What's wrong, Satomi-kun?”

“Ah, no… it's a bit selfish, but realizing that Yurika is a magical girl, I'm feeling that it's a bit sad.”

“Sad…?”

“What do you mean, Satomi-san?”

Normally, Yurika would feel abhorred and cry out after hearing that. But based on Koutarou's tone of voice, she, mysteriously enough, didn't feel that way.

“Hey Yurika, there's all kinds of people around me, right?”

“Yes.”

Sanae, Theia and Kiriha; Koutarou was surrounded by special people.

“But I always thought you were normal. Normal, just like me. You'd play around with your classmates and have fun. Even if the others went home, I always thought that you would spend these three years living a normal life.”

“Ah…”

Yurika hadn't thought of that. The few months after she had met Koutarou, she had lived like a normal girl. However, that had just ended. The moment when Koutarou admitted that she was a magical girl, it signaled the end of her normal life.

“It's selfish, right? I probably just wanted you to remain as a normal classmate. A normal classmate, with a special hobby.”

As Koutarou said that, Yurika felt it was a good thing that she was being carried. It wasn't enough for her to cry, but she knew that she was making a pitiful expression.

“Satomi-san…”

Then what about me? What did I want to be: a normal girl or a magical girl?

Yurika asked herself that, but she couldn't find an answer right away.

“…Yurika, fighting doesn't fit you.”

Koutarou looked up overhead. The sun and rainbow shone in the winter sky.

Nana-san, did you feel the same way?

“Sunshine and rainbows suit you better.”

Sunshine and Rainbows

Rather than casting magic and waving her cane around, Yurika suited basking in the sun and looking up towards the sky much more.

Fighting and Magic

Part 1

Wednesday, November 18

Inside the empty room 106 was Maki, standing at the center of the inner room, focusing. She was using her magic to thoroughly scan the room. She opened her eyes after several minutes and wiped the sweat off her brow.

"… I see, so the sword Satomi Koutarou used was created by controlling a portion of the magic power concentrated here."

From her investigation, Maki realized that the magic power wasn't just gigantic, its quality was amazing as well. The magic power matched the power flowing from the sword Koutarou had used earlier.

"With this kind of magic power, not even Rainbow Heart could leave it alone…"

The reason Yurika hadn't used the magic power concentrated in the room was because Rainbow Heart had forbidden the abuse of magic. For the very same reason, she couldn't use magic to prove her identity. But that restriction didn't matter to Koutarou, who wasn't part of Rainbow Heart. Maki thought it was only obvious that Koutarou would be using the magic power.

"But to think controlling only a portion of it had that much power. If I can steal the control of it, I might be able to overturn the difference in power."

Maki grabbed her cane and closed her eyes again.

If I reuse the spell Satomi Koutarou used… In reality, Sakuraba Harumi had done it, so I should be able too…

"… Analyze Magic – Modifier – High Precision – And – Casting Time Four Times."

Maki raised the precision of her magic and continued what she was doing. Maki's primary goal was to investigate the concentration of magic power and to flush out Yurika's accomplice. But depending on the outcome of her investigation, she might be able to go beyond that goal. She naturally applied more force with her hands.

Just you wait, Satomi Koutarou… I'll destroy that confidence of yours!

Right now, Maki felt more hostility towards Koutarou, who had chased her off, than Yurika.

"Satomi-san, it seems like Maki-chan is tampering with the magic power in room 106."

"It seems that way. Maki-san is standing in the middle of the room, doing something suspicious."

"Satomi-kun, you must have good eyes to be able to see from this far. I can't see anything at all."

Yurika used her magic while Koutarou just used his outstanding eyesight he had been born with to spy into room 106. But no matter how hard Harumi strained her eyes, she couldn't see the inside of the room.

"What's the situation?"

"She's probably examining the room; I can sense green-type magic, which is used for fortune telling. And also orange-type magic, for degeneration. That one is probably because she's trying to take control of the magic power."

"What else?"

"I can't see anything else from this distance using passive magic."

Fighting and Magic

Koutarou, Yurika and Harumi were on the roof of a five-story apartment house. From there, they were able to spy into room 106. Since they had picked a building far away in order to not be detected, Yurika was having a hard time getting a grasp of the situation.

“Should we get closer? Although we'd probably be discovered.”

“No, we'll need to rush in either way, so I'd rather make a surprise attack than find out what she's doing.”

Regardless of what she was doing, they had to get in Maki's way. Koutarou had decided that in that case, a surprise attack had a higher chance of success.

“I understand.”

Yurika agreed right away. Since Yurika was bad when it came to showdowns, she left the decision to Koutarou who specialized in fighting.

“So what are we going to do now, Satomi-kun, Nijino-san?”

“It doesn't look like we have a lot of time, so we'll need to attack.”

“In that case, I'll charge in.”

“Satomi-kun will!?”

Harumi was amazed by what Koutarou had said.

“We can't let Yurika go in her current state. She will keep her distance and support me.”

“T-That's true… but…”

Harumi was worried. Maki had strange abilities, she had experienced that first hand. She couldn't help but worry about Koutarou rushing in.

“In that case, I'll cast lots of spells on you while I can. If I do it when you get close, Maki-chan might notice.”

Yurika pulled out her cane and pointed it towards Koutarou.

Now that I think about it, that cane and that outfit used to belong to that Nana girl…

As he looked at Yurika's appearance, Koutarou recalled that. At the same time, he remembered that he hadn't apologized to Yurika yet.

“Yurika.”

“Yes?”

“I'm sorry for not believing you all this time.”

“Satomi-san…”

Yurika smiled and shook her head as Koutarou apologized.

“Life as a cosplayer this half year wasn't all that bad.”

“Yurika…”

Koutarou smiled wryly, it was all he could do in this situation.

“Besides, having you help me like this is more than enough.”

“I see. Then I'm counting on you with the magic.”

That was essential in order for Koutarou to continue helping Yurika.

“Yes.”

Fighting and Magic

Yurika smiled as she began her incantation.

Part 2

“Yes! I did it!”

Maki cheered, the girl who rarely showed emotion threw her cane up into the sky with joy.

“Since it was such ancient magic it took a while to operate, but I should eventually be able to gain complete control of it!”

Maki had succeeded in controlling the room's magic power. However, it was a near insignificant amount compared to what was concentrated. That was all she could do in a short amount of time.

“For the time being, I've managed to stop the energy supply flowing into Satomi Koutarou…”

However, having succeeded at analyzing the control was a big deal. Because of that she had been able to stop the power from flowing into Koutarou.

“Alright… At least now I don't have to worry about that ridiculous sword for a while…”

With the authority that Maki had obtained, she was only able to temporarily stop the magic power, but that alone was already a great outcome. If she did the same during the battle and robbed Koutarou of his sword, she would definitely win.

“But to think I'd see a spell using the ancient Folsarian language here of all places…”

The magic language being used in present day Folsaria had been modernized after the old language became obsolete. They analyzed and unified the magic being used, and restructured the incantations so that they would share the same alphabet and grammar, removing the need for idioms and making magic, overall, easier to use.

Magic using Folsaria's ancient language was said to have been the hardest to restructure. The language was not only too old, but phonetic and ideographic characters had been mixed in creating a very unique alphabet. It had very little in common with all other magic languages, and it was the hardest magic language to use.

“Satomi Koutarou… just who is he…?”

If he was related to Yurika or Rainbow Heart, the magic language he used would have been modern. But since this was an ancient magic language, it would mean that the spell had been brought here by ancient Folarians and had been inherited until this time period. And that meant that Koutarou was related to those people.

“The brains to create master plans, can use reinforcement magic without transforming and a master at necromancy. He also has considerable skills when it comes to fighting. On top of that, there's this magic power supply system based on ancient magic. There's not even that many people in Folsaria that could do this…”

Having gotten a grasp to the extent of Koutarou's powers(?), Maki was once again taken aback.

“But I won't lose next time. Now that I have control of this place, I'll definitely win!”

Her sense of rivalry towards Koutarou flared up once more. Right now, Maki's enemy wasn't Yurika, but Koutarou.

At that moment, a bell sounded from the decorations on her cane.

“You're finally here, Satomi Koutarou!”

Inside the barrier were five alarms that Maki had set up. The alarm that had been triggered was the one closest to room 106. The first four had been set in places easy to find, but the last one had been hidden. It was an old trick, but Koutarou and the others were amateurs and had easily fallen for it.

“You're too late, Satomi Koutarou! And Nijino Yurika!”

Which was why when they opened the door, Maki calmly greeted them.

Part 3

As Koutarou opened the door and jumped into room 106, she faced Koutarou and Yurika calmly, without any sign of surprise.

“You're too late, Satomi Koutarou! And Nijino Yurika!”

“She noticed us!?”

“Maki-san! We'll be taking back this room!”

“You're welcome to, if you can defeat me that is.”

“That's just what I'll do!”

However, Koutarou didn't care and rushed towards her. Normally, if a surprise attack failed, it was common to withdraw, but there was no room for retreat now. If Maki kept control of the room, something terrible would happen.

“Satomi-san!? R-Right, here we go, Angel Halo!!”

Yurika quickly realized his intentions and pointed her cane towards Koutarou's back.

“Effect – Release!”

With those few words, Koutarou's body began glowing in various colors. It was almost as if he was wearing a rainbow. Koutarou had been strengthened to the fullest of his potential, but in order to avoid detection by Maki, the effects had been sealed. Yurika's few words served to release the seal.

“I see, you've taken the size of this room into account and you're trying to make this into close quarters fight! In that case-!”

Seeing the spells covering Koutarou, Maki saw through his goals and stepped back.

“Ah!?”

Maki broke the window and jumped outside. If Koutarou was going for a fist fight, Maki had no reason to stay in the room. Her best option was to get somewhere open where she could use her ranged attacks.

“Wait!”

Koutarou dashed through the room and jumped out through the window. But Yurika slowly walked to the center of the room and stopped.

“Maki-chan left the room!? Why!?”

Yurika frowned, but it wasn't because her wounds hurt. Maki was supposed to be after this room. But she had easily given it up and jumped outside. Yurika couldn't understand why she had done that.

“Analyze Magic!”

However, she soon found out why.

The spell has been encrypted!? I see, so that's what she's after!!

After finding out the reason with her magic, she quickly chased after Koutarou. She didn't have the time to undo the encryption. Maki was planning on defeating either Koutarou or Yurika first.

“You're pretty good, Koutarou!”

“You too, Maki-san!”

Fighting and Magic

Once Yurika had gotten outside, Koutarou and Maki were already in the middle of their fight. The two of them were fighting on the road next to Corona House. At this time, the road was normally well trafficked but thanks to the barrier, there was no one around.

“Satomi-san, watch out! Maki-chan is after us!”

Yurika called out to Koutarou, but he didn't respond. He was too busy dealing with Maki to do that.

“Mind Flare!”

“That's nothing! How about this!”

Koutarou dodged Maki's spell and unleashed a kick as he got close.

“Quick Cast – Force Field!”

However, Koutarou's foot crashed into Maki's shield of light. Koutarou's body had been strengthened by Yurika's magic, on top of that he was covered with attack spells. Because of that his kick packed quite the punch, once it collided with the shield an intense flash occurred.

“Damnit, this doesn't work either!”

The red light enveloping Koutarou's right leg vanished, it had been used up.

“This man is better than I thought!”

Since she had used magic to defend herself, Maki was able to act quicker. She jumped far back and took some distance from Koutarou.

“I can't use any big spells with him this close!”

“Wait!”

Koutarou quickly chased after Maki. If she maintained the distance, she would have the advantage.

“Sonic Impact – Modifier – Touch Trigger!”

Koutarou's right leg began glowing red once more. Yurika had used her magic from the rear to rearm him.

“…The injured Yurika is supporting him from behind, entrusting all of her magic to Koutarou, and making this a close quarters fight that magicians are bad at. A solid plan.”

If I wasn't good at fighting in close quarters, I would be in trouble!

Maki readjusted her grip on her cane and quickly started on an incantation.

“Quick Double Cast – Acceleration, Tiny Memory Flash – Modifier – Touch Trigger!”

Her body began glowing yellow and her cane blue. She had increased her reflex speed and covered her cane with an offensive spell that erased a few seconds of their memory.

“Satomi-san, make sure you dodge that!”

“So that's the memory erasing spell!”

Before the fighting had started, Yurika had told Koutarou what she knew about Maki's spells. That included the spell currently covering her cane.

“Correct!”

Koutarou and Maki closed in on each other, and a close quarter fight began. With his body strengthened on top of being fit, Koutarou had the upper hand in terms of physical prowess. However, Maki had a cane with a long reach to make up for the difference. The most

troublesome of all was the spell covering the cane. Since it was activated through touch, it worked for both offense and defense.

“Taaaaaaa!”

“Woah, not good, she's not going to let me close in!”

Koutarou was unable to get nearer, the attacks Maki made with her cane were too severe. Thanks to Yurika's cooperation, Koutarou was able to dodge it, but because of the spell, clumsily attacking was too dangerous. In this situation a few seconds of memory loss would mean defeat. Because of that, Koutarou was being stalled by the cane, and couldn't get in close enough to use his fists.

“Satomi-san, back away for a moment!”

“Yurika!?”

When Yurika said that, Koutarou didn't hesitate to cut his attack short and fall back.

As he put some distance between himself and Maki, he felt that the indigo light coming from the cane looked more ominous than before.

“Control Plant – Modifier – Extend Length Four Times!”

Along with Yurika's words, the trees by the road suddenly began moving. She was using her magic to control them, and their branches reached out towards Maki.

“Curse you, Yurika!”

Annoyed by Yurika's intervention, Maki used her cane to smack away the branches. As she did, the indigo light covering her cane began to vanish. After touching the branches, the magic that had been charged in the cane had been consumed.

“Satomi-san!”

“Leave it to me!”

By the time Yurika yelled out, Koutarou had already charged in. This was his chance, there was no way he would let it pass.

“Got you!!”

Koutarou used all of his power and threw his right fist towards Maki. She readied her cane to protect herself, but it seemed like he was about to blow her away along with her cane.

“—In the end I have no choice to but to use this.”

However, before Koutarou's fist could reach Maki, a black disc appeared and blocked it.

“What!?”

At that moment, pretty much all of the spells cast on Koutarou vanished. The only ones that remained were the ones furthest away from his right fist that had collided with the black disc.

“Satomi-san, hurry up and run!”

The black disc moved the same time Yurika shouted. The disc was absorbed by Maki's cane, and it turned black.

“Surprised? This is your power after all. Of course, I can only use a portion it right now.”

“My power!?”

Koutarou stopped moving after hearing what Maki said.

“Maki-chan is controlling the power in room 106! So hurry up and run!”

“So that's—”

“It's too late to run now!”

Maki laughed as she pointed her cane at Koutarou. It was the expression of someone convinced of their victory.

I've gotten control of the magic concentration! Satomi Koutarou can't use this ridiculous magic power anymore, I'll be the one to use it! In other words, it's my win!

Up until now, Koutarou had been looking down on Maki. He had been making fun of her when she first transferred to their school, and at the welcoming party he had stolen information about her. On top of that, he had interfered in their fight at the construction site.

She had several misunderstandings about Koutarou, but she was so certain of her victory against him that she didn't care.

“Die and return to the soil of your homeland, Satomi Koutarou!”

That was a frequently used phrase in Folsaria. It was said that the dead returned to the now lost lands of ancient Folsaria. So that saying was the equivalent of handing someone their death sentence.

“Lightning Lance – Modifier – Change Element Darkness – And – High Concentration!”

Like she had done at the construction site, Maki created a lightning spear. However unlike before, the spear was black, and it was contracting. As the spear shrunk, it got darker, and once it finally stabilized it was like staring at a black hole.

“Satomi-san!”

“Not good!”

Koutarou tried to run away, but since the majority of spells cast on him had been erased, he was now moving much slower.

“Taaaaake thiiis, Satomi Koutaroooou!!”

Maki unleashed the black spear against Koutarou who was trying his best to dodge.

Satomi Koutarou, there's no way you can dodge this spear the way you are now!

The spear discharged several black electrical currents and closed in on Koutarou.

“Quick Cast – Anti-Magical Shield – Modifier – Maximize!”

Yurika used almost all of her remaining magic power to cast a defensive spell on Koutarou, but, Maki's spear reached Koutarou before Yurika's spell could activate.

“Uwaaaaah!?”

“Satomi-saaaaaaan!!”

When hit by the spear, Koutarou wasn't just shocked; he could feel his strength leaving his body. His limbs went numb and his body got cold. The spear that consisted of darkness had stolen his life force.

“Ugh… D-Damnit.”

Koutarou fell to his knees. The spear hadn't actually injured him, but with his life force stolen, he was unable to move.

“Oh, to think you'd survive after being hit by that. As expected from Satomi Koutarou, perhaps?”

Fighting and Magic

As I thought a single blow wasn't enough… But with this, the white magic power inside his body should be all used up. The next one will finish him off!

“Satomi-san, you can't stop, run!”

“I can't… my body won't move…”

On top of her severe injuries, Yurika had used up all of her magic power while Koutarou had his life force stolen by the black spear. The two of them could no longer move.

I-I at least need to get Yurika out of here…

Koutarou used all of his strength to move his body.

…She's not the kind of girl that should fight!

But the best he could do was move the fingers on his right hand. The rest of his body wouldn’t budge.

“Maki-chan, don't do anything else to Satomi-san!”

“Are you kidding, Yurika? You should know just how dangerous this man is to us.”

Maki sighed as she created two black spears. She was going to use them to finish them both off.

I wasn't able to control that much of that room's magic power, but it's more than enough…

As Maki pointed her cane towards the two, she was once again impressed by the magic power concentrated in room 106. If she could make that power Darkness Rainbow's, they could overturn the power balance.

“Well then, this is goodbye.”

“I-It's no use…”

No matter how hard he tried, his body wouldn't move. Even Koutarou realized his defeat.

“Satomi-san.”

Yurika used her cane as support and headed towards Koutarou. Having used up all of her magic power, there was nothing else she could do. But even then, she was determined to protect Koutarou. However, due to her injuries, Yurika's progress was slow. She wasn't going to make it to Koutarou before Maki unleashed her spears.

“Farewell, Nijino Yurika and Satomi Koutarou.”

Maki unleashed her spears against Koutarou and Yurika. The two spears roared as they tore through the sky.

Just when everyone thought that all was lost–

“Karama, Korama, spiritual energy field at max power, focus everything you have forward.”

The voice of a girl could be heard.

“Understood Ho-!”

“Leave it to us Ho-!”

The next moment, two haniwas appeared in front of Koutarou. They were Kiriha's servants, Karama and Korama.

“What!?”

As Maki opened her eyes wide in surprise, the two Haniwa's created a shield made of yellow light in front of them.

Fighting and Magic

“A barrier!? But you won't be able to block my spears with a single spell!!”

“Then there's no need to worry. This isn't magic.”

As the black spears flew into the shield, their trajectories changed and they flew up into the sky. The spears had tremendous power behind them, but they had been splendidly parried. However, Maki barely paid any attention to that; she was distracted by Kiriha who had appeared from an alley.

“Kurano Kiriha? There's a barrier in place, so how did you get in? And what's with those clay figures!?”

Maki was taken aback by the sudden appearance of Kiriha, and by the power of the two haniwas that had been able to parry her attack.

“Sanae came calling us over, and Harumi was here waiting. It was easy for us to get in.”

“Satomi-kun, Nijino-san, as you asked, I've brought everyone here!”

“Koutarou, are you okay!?”

When Kiriha mentioned Harumi and Sanae, the two of them appeared from behind her. Harumi had brought Kiriha and the others to Koutarou and Yurika. Before the battle, Yurika had opened up a hole in the barrier. Harumi had waited by that spot and let Kiriha and the others in.

“Karama and Korama were able to deflect the spears because they're used to that type of attack.”

The black spears stole the life force of a human. That was very similar to stealing spiritual energy. Karama and Korama were skilled at controlling spiritual energy. They might not have been able to defend against a normal spell, but the black spears in this case were under their specialty.

“However, you won't be able to defeat me by staying on the defensive!”

Some mysterious girls appeared… I've taken too long… Now then, what to do?

Having understood the situation, Maki showed a confident attitude while thinking ahead for a plan. But Maki didn't have that long to think.

“Agreed, you can't win a battle without attacking.”

“Your highness, electrical communication may be jammed, but it seems we can still use subspace communication.”

“…And attacking is my specialty!”

Next up, Theia and Ruth appeared. As they appeared, Theia immediately began her attack.

“Blue Knight! High Convergence Laser Bombardment! Annihilate the enemy that stands before me!”

Theia used her bracelet to order her warship in orbit, the Blue Knight, to start the attack.

“Your highness, that's too much!”

“That's not true! Torturing my knight is punishable by death!!”

“As you wish, my princess.”

Theia was furious. Burning with rage, she glared at Maki. Koutarou was Theia's vassal, and lately he was becoming something more. Theia simply couldn't find it in her to forgive someone that had hurt him.

“Quick Cast – Force Field – Modifier – Maximize!”

Fighting and Magic

With the way Theia was acting, Maki sensed something bad was coming and used all of her magic power to cast a defensive spell. Theia had chosen a laser weapon. Normally, there wouldn't be enough time to block, but since the attack was coming from orbit, there was a slight lag before the attack came. Maki was able to cast her spell the moment before the attack hit.

The lasers punched through the atmosphere and rained down on Maki. As the lasers descended from out of orbit, they had decelerated greatly, but they still had more than enough power behind them. Because of that, Maki's full powered defensive spell easily began giving away.

At this rate they'll break through my shield!! Then what about this!?

Maki used the remaining power she had gotten from room 106 and poured it into her defense. As she did, the magical shield in front of her recovered and turned black. Although it was giving way at first, it now barely held up against the Blue Knight's bombardment.

“Oh… Even if it may have been weakened by the atmosphere, to think you'd withstand a bombardment.”

“T-this kind of attack power is ridic…!”

Maki had used up all of the magic power she had stolen from room 106, and all of her own as well. If she hadn’t done that, she wouldn't have been able to withstand the Blue Knight's bombardment.

“But with this it's over! Blue Knight, fire a limited Genesis Buster!”

“Your highne~ss!! Stop it or I'll get angry!!”

Theia tried to bring out the anti-matter cannon, but Ruth desperately stopped her. The cannon had far too much power to be used on a single person.

“Koutarou has to stand on the stage with me!! We'll shout at each other, laugh together and create the play together!! Even then, someone dared harm Koutarou!! I definitely can't forgive her!!”

Fighting and Magic

“Are you trying to destroy that Satomi-sama along with this planet!?”

“Ugh.”

“Don't worry, leave the rest to me, Theia-san.”

Finally, Shizuka appeared. She approached Maki without making a sound and swung her fist.

“I have no intention of forgiving someone who broke my window.”

Maki was a skilled martial artist. But since she was exhausted after her fight with Koutarou and Yurika, she had used up all of her magic that she normally combined with her martial arts. In that state, Maki had no way of avoiding Shizuka's attack.

“Kyaaaaa!”

After receiving Shizuka's consecutive attacks, Maki slammed into the asphalt. Just a minute ago, Maki had an overwhelming advantage, but now she was covered in wounds.

I was too obsessed with defeating Satomi Koutarou and failed because of my greed…

Having taken this much damage, even Maki had to admit defeat. She should have stayed true to her original objective of gathered information.

However, I was able to get a grasp of the power of the people around Satomi Koutarou. If I can get home safely, this will end in a draw!

Even in this situation, Maki was thinking of escaping Koutarou and the others.

“In that case!”

Maki quickly got up and raised her cane above her head.

“You still want to go at it!?”

Shizuka reacted by taking a stance, however nobody expected Maki's next course of action.

“…Thank you for everything up until now, Twilight Wing.”

Maki pulled off one of the accessories on her cane. Seeing that, Yurika realized Maki's goal and warned everyone.

“This is bad, everyone, brace yourselves for an incoming attack! Maki-chan is about to use a spell!”

“An attack!? In that state!?”

“Geez, she's so stubborn!”

“Karama, Korama, deploy the spiritual energy field. Protect everyone.”

“Got it Ho-!”

While everyone was bracing themselves, Maki began her incantation.

“… Sacrifice – Twilight Wing – Precast Spell – Release.”

By destroying her own cane, Maki released the magic power inside it and then cast a spell using that magic power. The cane was a magical girl's life. It was a tool required to cast advanced spells. On top of that, once lost, it took a considerable amount of time to recreate. Because of that, no matter how much magic power it held, magical girls wouldn't just destroy it at a moment’s notice. Having been backed into a corner, this attack was Maki's ace up her sleeve.

“Next time won't go the same way, Nijino Yurika! And Satomi Koutarou!”

The spell Maki had used to escape erased several hours’ worth of memories from the surrounding people.

Part 4

“And that's how I managed to escape. Today was a rough day, really.”

Maki's voice echoed in her empty room. Around her were the same six girls from before.

“That really does sound rough, Maki.”

“It might have been rough for Maki personally, but to us, this was a great success.”

“That's true, Purple-anesama. I think so too. If Navy-chan hadn't investigated this thoroughly we would have not only been facing that man but also a bunch of girls we knew nothing about.”

Maki was in the middle of reporting about the results of her fight with Koutarou and Yurika to her allies.

“So you mentioned controlling a portion of that magic power, but how was it, Maki?”

“Hmm, I would say it was about as much as ten shots of your Inferno Fire.”

“That much!?”

Hearing Maki's report, the eyes of the girl in red began sparkling. The girl in red only sought to strengthen herself. Because of that she was unable to hide her hopes and excitement as she imagined controlling the power in room 106.

“If a small portion has that much power, the entirety of that power must be massive.”

“Yes.”

Maki nodded at the girl in violet's words.

“Even if all seven of us used it, it would still give each one of us power the equivalent of that of an artifact’s, if not more. It looks like it will take a lot of time to analyze though.”

As she reached that point of her report, Maki's face turned darker.

“However, it will take quite the determination to repel those that live there.”

“You mean that blonde girl's attack that took all of the magic power you controlled to block?”

“I'm more interested in the girl using those two haniwas. Haniwas are cute, right?”

“There were also mentions of a master in martial arts, right? I can't wait to face her.”

“You can't forget about Nijino Yurika. And most of all, that man that I can't hate enough, Satomi Koutarou.”

As she mentioned Koutarou's name, Maki's calm expression warped with rage, and she began grinding her teeth.

“That man is a threat with his necromancy and his control of the magic power in that room. And what's more, he's smart. Who knows what trap he will have ready for next time…”

“…Are you in love?”

“Could you not casually say something so frightening!? I don't want anything to do with a smart man that manipulates others!”

Maki specialized in magic that manipulated the minds of others because she didn't want to be betrayed.

Ever since she had been born in Folsaria, Maki had been constantly betrayed. Her parents sold her off as a slave. The slaves she had been planning on running away with had informed their master just before the plan went into action. Maki had lived her life with betrayal as a regular

occurrence. Maki had only been able to escape that life because Darkness Rainbow had seen the magic potential she had.

Since she abhorred betrayals, Maki would never betray anyone. But she was afraid that she would be betrayed if she didn't make others obey her through force. Because of that, Maki was unable to believe in people and sought only power and to control those people with her mind manipulation magic. So when Maki had seen Yurika trust in Koutarou, she felt nothing but disgust.

That man is the worst! He plays with others feelings, he uses and then betrays them. I'll definitely correct him with my magic!

So if Maki was to ever fall in love, it would be with an honest man that would never betray anyone. To her, Koutarou was nothing but an existence to be hated.

“…Anyways.”

Once the girl in violet mumbled that, Maki, who was lost in thought, snapped back to reality and forgot about Koutarou. As Maki returned to herself, the girl in violet continued.

“It would probably be for the best if we proceeded with caution in the future.”

As the girl in violet proposed that, the other six girls nodded their heads in agreement. After listening to Maki's report, they all understood the seriousness of the situation.

“Maki, you should hurry and recreate your cane. And gather information while maintaining their trust. Since you erased their memories we should make sure to use that.”

Maki had no objections; either way, she had no way of fighting until she had completed a new cane.

“The remaining members should hurry up with their preparations. That said, those wounded won't heal faster because of that…”

The seven officers, excluding the girl in violet and Maki, were all unable to act. They were either healing up from their wounds, in the middle of rehabilitation or training their successors. They still hadn't recovered from the damage from their battle with Rainbow Nana.

“I have some things to do over here, so you'll have to carry the burden on your own for a while, Maki.”

“Don't worry. With that man as my opponent, that's just what I want.”

“…Don't go too crazy, Maki.”

With those words serving as parting words, the girls surrounding Maki disappeared. The meeting was over and Maki was left all alone in her room.

Satomi Koutarou. At the very least, I’ll defeat you on my own before the others arrive!

Maki's hatred for Koutarou boiled inside of her, as if she hadn't heard her allies warnings.

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

Part 1

Sunday, November 29

Koutarou pulled out a sea creature from the water tank and put it in Harumi's hand as she was closing her eyes.

“Kyaaa! S-Satomi-kun, what is this!?”

“It's a sea urchin.”

Surprised by the thorny sensation, Harumi opened her eyes. As she did, she discovered the sea urchin in her hand. It was much smaller than she had imagined when it had been placed in her hand.

“Nahahaha, there's no need to be that surprised.”

“Satomi-kun, don't laugh that much please.”

“I refuse.”

“Satomi-kun!!”

Koutarou continued to laugh at the panicking Harumi. Meanwhile, Harumi was pouting. Their appearances were slightly different from how they normally looked.

“Satomi-san really is a bully.”

“In Kou's case, it's more that he's a kid rather than a bully.”

Koutarou and the others were inside an aquarium, at a section where they could touch some of the sea creatures. It was an exhibition where harmless creatures had been gathered in a small water tank so that visitors could enjoy themselves. Koutarou had found this section of the aquarium and brought an unsuspecting Harumi with him to play a prank on her. Seeing that. Yurika and Kenji sighed.

But everything seems to be working out well. Good thing you mustered up your courage and invited Satomi-san, Sakuraba-senpai…

Yurika might have been amazed, but she looked at Koutarou and Harumi with a smile. Right now, they were different from how they normally were; they were heading in the direction Yurika had hoped for. Koutarou was less reserved around Harumi, and Harumi was more open with Koutarou. The refreshing environment worked wonders for the two.

Today, Koutarou and the others were using tickets that Harumi had been given to visit an aquarium. In total there were four of them: Koutarou with Harumi, and Yurika with Kenji. They were in groups that Harumi and Yurika had planned beforehand.

“If you're going to say that much, I'll show you the terror of kids.”

“Crabs?”

“Do it, crab army! Defeat Mackenzie!”

Koutarou's next target was Kenji. He handed off four crabs to Kenji and began poking their shells.

“Uwah, ow, ow ow ow!”

Sensing danger, the crabs used their pincers to counter attack. But since Koutarou hurriedly stepped back, their pincers pinched Kenji's hand instead. Having his fingers pinched, Kenji wanted to quickly shake off the crabs, but since they belonged to the aquariums exhibit, he couldn't. He ran back and forth by the water tank while screaming in pain.

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

“Hehehe, learned your lesson, Mackenzie?”

“Satomi-san, isn't that too much…”

“Then I'll give one to you too.”

“Eh?”

Koutarou put a crab in Yurika's hand as well. As he did, before she was even pinched, she ran back and forth around the water tank like Kenji.

“Kyaaa! Kyaaa! Kyaaaaa!”

Just having powerful pincers was enough for the cowardly Yurika to be frightened.

“There you go, run around together like good friends.”

“Satomi-kun.”

Koutarou put his hands on his hips and looked at Kenji and Harumi running around with a satisfied expression. At that moment, Harumi pulled on Koutarou's sleeve.

“Hm? What is it, Sakuraba-senpai?”

“This is for you.”

At the same time Koutarou turned around, Harumi put a hermit crab in his hand.

“Eh?”

Before Koutarou realized the situation, Harumi poked the hermit crab with her slender finger. As she did, the hermit crab brought out its large pincers.

“Ouch, owowowow!”

The hermit crab pinched Koutarou's finger with all of its might. And before long, Koutarou was running around the water tank alongside Kenji and Yurika.

“W-What are you doing, Sakuraba-senpai!?”

“Fufu, Fufufufu.”

Harumi happily looked on as the three ran around in circles.

Thank you, Nijino-san. This is all thanks to you…

She felt grateful towards Yurika. Having come out to play with Koutarou, Harumi had become a bit bolder than normal. The refreshing environment of the aquarium allowed her to do that. Harumi felt that she had gotten a little closer to Koutarou.

But I wonder why? Nijino-san seems unhappy in some way…

Yurika was as noisy as always. But to Harumi, Yurika's expression looked sad somehow.

I just hope nothing has happened…

Harumi looked at Yurika running around and began thinking if she could be of help to her.

Part 2

“Yurika is depressed?”

“Yes. That's what it looks like to me. Did you notice anything, Satomi-kun?”

As Harumi said that, she looked at Yurika's back as she walked next to Kenji. Yurika was talking to Kenji as she looked around the aquarium with sparkling eyes.

“Hmm…”

Koutarou stared at Yurika and recalled the past few days.

Now that I think about it, she seems to have been feeling down since that day she skipped school…

He couldn't notice anything specific, but Koutarou could feel that her overall cheerfulness had diminished.

“You're right. That might be true.”

“I thought so… I want Nijino-san to return to her normal cheerful self.”

“Sakuraba-senpai…”

Koutarou understood what Harumi was saying. Regardless of what she was doing, Yurika should always be cheerful.

“I'll try to cheer Nijino-san up. So I want you to take care of her too, Satomi-kun.”

“I understand. I'll talk to her when I get the chance.”

Koutarou had no objections.

“Thank you, Satomi-kun.”

Harumi began smiling again. It was a beautiful smile filled with trust and gentleness.

She really is beautiful…

Her looks didn't matter. Koutarou fell for her inner beauty.

“Kou, you're telling me to go buy juice with this hand?”

“Ugh.”

Kenji opened his hand and showed it to Koutarou, who slightly flinched. Kenji's palm was covered in wounds from the crabs’ pincers.

“I guess it can't be helped, I'll go.”

“Of course you will.”

Since the crabs were Koutarou's fault, he reluctantly took on the job of getting everyone something to drink.

“Satomi-kun, should I come too?”

Harumi asked Koutarou if she should accompany him, but he shook his head.

“Sakuraba-senpai, just rest here.”

Having enjoyed the aquarium, Koutarou and the others had decided on taking a short rest before going home. The one who needed the rest the most was of course Harumi, who had a weak constitution. Koutarou wanted her to rest as long as possible.

“But…”

Harumi still persisted. Since she understood Koutarou was worried, she felt like apologizing.

“It's okay, Sakuraba-senpai.”

However, when Koutarou took a peek at Yurika, Harumi realized his intentions. On top of letting Harumi rest, he was planning on taking Yurika with him to talk to her.

“I understand.”

Having understood his intentions, Harumi nodded and smiled at Koutarou.

I'm counting on you… Satomi-kun really is… fufufu…

Her big smile showed her complete confidence in Koutarou.

“Alright, Yuri—”

“I'm coming too, Satomi-san.”

Before Koutarou could call out to Yurika, she had asked to come with him.

“If I leave it to you alone, you'll definitely buy something strange for me, Satomi-san!”

“Nijino-san, make sure he buys a proper one for me too.”

“Leave it to me, Mackenzie-san!”

Both Yurika and Kenji were used to Koutarou's pranks.

Leaving Harumi and Kenji behind at the waiting room by the entrance, Koutarou and Yurika headed towards the stand. Although there was a vending machine at the waiting room, the stand had a wider range of stock. On top of that, it was more convenient to walk the short distance to the stand if you wanted time to talk.

She does seem kind of down…

Once Harumi and Kenji were out of sight, Yurika dropped her shoulders and looked down. Yurika had been putting on a brave face in front of those two but, once it was just her and Koutarou, she let her guard down a little.

“Yurika, did something happen lately? You seem a bit down.”

“Satomi-san…”

Surprised, Yurika looked up, but once she caught a glimpse of Koutarou's face she looked down again.

“Sakuraba-senpai is worried too.”

“…I see…”

Still looking down, Yurika sighed.

“I'm just having… troubles with my friends…”

Yurika was depressed because Koutarou and the others were treating her as a cosplayer again.

Maki's last attack had erased several hours’ worth of memories from Koutarou and the others. Because of that, they had completely forgotten about their fight with Maki and the fact that Yurika was a magical girl.

Yurika was once again being treated like a cosplayer. Because she was so happy that the people around her had finally understood her, the recoil was even bigger.

If it was going to be like this, I wish my memories had been erased too…

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

Maki's spell didn't have an effect on Yurika. That was thanks to the resistance that her outfit and cane had, but right now, Yurika felt nothing but unhappiness by the fact that her memories had remained intact. Her short lived joy, followed by depression cast a shadow on Yurika's feelings.

Knowing that everyone but Yurika had lost their memories, Maki was still going to Kitsushouharukaze High School while feigning innocence. So normally, Yurika should be focusing on that, but now was not the time for that.

Part 3

“Human relations?”

“Actually, some people had a misunderstanding about me… and when that was finally about to be resolved, they misunderstood me again by chance…”

“I see… I'm sorry to hear that.”

Yurika's story was a little vague, but Koutarou understood that it was about magical girls and cosplayers.

Maybe she was scolded by her teacher after she skipped school…

Having lost their memories, Koutarou and the others perceived the day when Yurika and Maki had fought as Yurika forcing Maki to skip school with her.

“…It's regrettable and sad…”

With Koutarou acting like that, Yurika got even more depressed. It was a natural reaction.

“What should I do? For example—”

Yurika stopped and looked at Koutarou with a serious expression.

“For example, how would I get you to understand that I'm a magical girl, Satomi-san?”

Harumi had told her that she had to keep going. So Yurika kept going and Koutarou and the others finally understood that she was a magical girl. But in the end, everything returned to normal. Everything had been in vain. It was if somebody had told Yurika that, and she couldn't help but feel depressed.

“I don't really know what's troubling you but…”

Koutarou knew that's why Yurika was depressed. But since she used it as an example instead, he pretended he hadn't noticed.

“If for example you want me to believe that you're a magical girl, then… let's see…”

“…Then…!?”

Yurika leaned in forward, and waited for Koutarou's next words.

“Then I don't think you need to do anything.”

“…Eh?”

However, his next words were completely unexpected.

Don't do anything?

At first she thought that she had misheard him. So Yurika stopped in place and raised her voice.

“J-Just wait, what do you mean I don't have to do anything!? Because up to now, you haven't believed me even once!!”

“That's certainly true.”

Koutarou stopped, and smiled wryly as he scratched his head.

“I've started to think that it doesn't really matter if you're a cosplayer or a magical girl.”

“It doesn't… matter?”

Koutarou's next words confused Yurika even more. To her, it was a very important problem.

“What do you mean it doesn't matter!? It's very important!!”

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

Yurika approached Koutarou, excited, but he stared at her with a calm expression.

“Is that so? I don't really think so.”

“Why!? You mean you won't believe me!?”

“I believe you.”

“Then why!?”

“It's because I believe you, Yurika.”

Koutarou continued talking in a gentle tone to the excited Yurika.

“I don't remember when… but there was a time when you covered Sakuraba-senpai and were enveloped in flames.”

“Eh…?”

Those were memories he was supposed to have forgotten. But when he said that, Yurika calmed down.

“When was that? Hmm? That's weird, I can't remember… Yurika, when did that happen again?”

Koutarou looked puzzled. He could clearly remember Yurika protecting Harumi, but he couldn't remember when that happened or why.

“Satomi-san… could it be…”

If my defensive spell was still in effect back then, Satomi-san's memories shouldn’t have completely vanished! I'm sure that's it!

Before Maki could cast her final spell, Yurika cast a spell on Koutarou to protect him. Since that spell was still in effect when they got hit, Koutarou may not have completely lost his memories of events that left a deep impression on him. But if Yurika tried to explain that, it would only confuse him. Yurika shook her head and decided to just keep him in the dark.

“I'm sorry, I can't remember either. So many things happen every day.”

“Really? Well that doesn't matter. Either way, after seeing that, I felt like it doesn't matter if you can use magic or not.”

“Why…?”

Yurika looked up at Koutarou with expectation. That might have been her reliance on Koutarou.

“No matter who you are, you're a good person. There aren't that many that would willingly throw away their own lives to protect others. I doesn’t matter if they're a magical girl or a cosplayer.”

What was important to Koutarou wasn't whether or not she could use magic, but if she would protect people when it really mattered.

“So, even if you can't use magic, if you say you're a magical girl, I don't really mind. You can do things worthy of being called a magical girl.”

“Satomi-san.”

People that can use magic, but don't save people. People that can't use magic but save people. Koutarou was more likely to believe in the latter if they called themselves a magical girl of love and courage. It didn't matter to Koutarou if they could use magic or not.

“Fu, fufufufu.”

The antagonizing feelings inside Yurika melted away, like snow bathed in spring's sunshine. And the melted feelings poured out of her eyes as tears.

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

That's right, that's why I looked up to Sakuraba-senpai…

Harumi was unable to use magic. However, from the day she met her, Yurika had wanted to become a magical girl like Harumi.

She couldn't become a magical girl like the genius Nana. However, she could become one like Harumi. Yurika had her answer from the start.

“However, I'd be worried having a careless girl like you using magic, so I'm hoping you'll stay as a cosplayer.”

Koutarou smiled wryly and dropped his shoulders. Hearing those words, Yurika recalled Koutarou's previous words.

Sunshine and rainbows suit you better.

Yurika understood the true meaning behind his words.

“With that in mind, I have something I'd like to ask, Yurika.”

“…Yes?”

Without wiping her tears, Yurika looked straight at Koutarou. She already knew what he was about to say. Her tears streamed down her cheeks and fell, while sparkling in the air.

“Who should I think of you as?”

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

The words that left Koutarou's mouth were exactly what she had expected.

“Fu, fufufu, fufufufufu.”

A warm feeling filled her up inside. This time, those feelings became tears and overflowed from her eyes. Yurika wiped her tears away and revealed a large smile.

“I'm Nijino Yurika…”

In the past when Koutarou had realized Yurika's identity, he had said that he wanted to graduate together with her-

“I'm your classmate, and a freeloading girl.”

-and now, Yurika felt that it wouldn't be that bad to graduate together with Koutarou.

I wonder why. I always wanted him to believe I was a magical girl, but now…

As if to grab a hold of her warm feelings, Yurika firmly grabbed the chest area of her clothes. Koutarou thought of her as a normal girl, even now. In fact, he even wished that was the case. While Yurika wondered why, she was also very happy.

“I see.”

“So… So, let's cosplay together next time, Satomi-san…”

That was most likely the only pitfall in the group date plan that Yurika had come up with-

“I refuse.”

“You're always so mean, Satomi-san, there's no need to be so embarrassed…”

-In Shoujo mangas, the girl that planned the group date was likely to fall in love with the boy she was trying to set her best friend up with.

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

Part 4

In a small office in a certain place…

It was a dull place with five office desks in it. Other furniture included lockers for five people and a dirty old TV. It was about as equally dull as Maki's room. However, the office had plenty of signs of someone living in it.

Leftover cups from cup noodles, candy wrappers and various other things were scattered about. In the past, the residents would try to clean up, but they had already lost their passion for that. It had a similar atmosphere to Yurika's wardrobe.

When brought together, it was a room that gathered the bad aspects of both Yurika's and Maki's rooms. Inside that room were five people. Those lazy residents laid down on their desks and lazily spent the afternoon.

“…Hey, we really were demoted, right?”

A short-haired young man muttered those words. Since the only other sounds in the room were from those of cell phone games, his voice sounded awfully loud.

“Don't say that, we're all trying not to think about it!”

The only woman amongst the five responded in a hysterical voice. Her eyes were burning with determination, and her large eyebrows only served to strengthen it.

“S-Sorry.”

The young man quickly apologized. Seeing the young man like that, the boy playing a cell phone game stopped and laughed.

“It's fine, really. It's the truth after all. I think it's great that I get paid for playing around though.”

The background music from the boy’s cell phone game continued playing as he spoke. The melody was full of suspense and tension; it was an absurd melody to have playing in this dull room.

“I thought this was a wonderful post when I was first assigned here too…”

“Are you stupid? In what world would you find invaders? We've fallen for the government's excuse of taking preemptive measures.”

The last two people, a man eating curry rice and a man wearing shades, got a word in. Like the other three, they also had a negligent atmosphere to them. They all knew. These troublemakers had been demoted and assigned here.

“The time keeps flowing, ignoring the five of us.”

As the man in shades dropped his shoulders, an alarm placed in the room noisily rang out.

“Uwah!? W-What!?”

“Nii-chan, fire! It's a fire!”

“In pizzerias overseas, their ovens let out this alarm to let them know when the pizzas are done.”

“You're wrong, this is the mobilization signal!!”

“So this is it…”

Over a year had passed since the five of them had been assigned here, but this alarm hadn't rung out even once. Because of that, everyone had forgotten all about it.

“Gentlemen, it's the enemy!”

Magical Girl ☆ Rainbow Yurika

The TV turned on by itself and an elderly man with white beard and a lab coat appeared.

“The time has finally come to show off our powers!”

“Professor, what do you mean by enemies!?”

“The underground people! The underground people are invading the surface to steal the sun from us!”

Along with the elderly man’s statement, the screen on the TV changed. On the screen, they could see a man in strange clothes stepping into a kindergarten and a woman in japanese clothes, giving orders.

“We got a report from one of the children! Hurry up! They're targeting the kindergarten!”

“What!?”

Hearing the elderly man’s report, the five people hurriedly stood up.

They were a secret organization, ridiculed as being a waste of money. But they had finally gotten a chance to shine.

“Alriiiiiiiigh!! It's time to show off my karate!”

“It's here, it's finally here!! Let the games begin!”

“It's finally starting, my romance with the beautiful enemy officers! Thank god, I thought I'd be single forever!!”

“The underground people, I hope they have delicious food…”

“Hmph, you're too naive kids. Those kinds of easygoing things won't happen. Hardboiled, rough days are about to start.”

The Sun Squad, Sun Rangers.

Their first enemy was the purely evil underground people that had come from the bottom of the earth.

Afterword

Long time no see everybody, it's the author, Takehaya. This time I have finished volume 5. In this volume, Yurika's enemy finally appears. Working hard in the shadows, making use of her position as a cosplayer; the time for this unfortunate girl to shine will finally… will it come? It would be nice if it did. Please watch over her with a gentle look, everyone.

That's right, I actually wrote this volume from my new home. I finished moving at the start of March. My new home is very quiet, and I'll be able to focus on writing. However there are still cardboard boxes I haven't packed up spread out here and there. It's been almost two months but I haven't gotten up to cleaning up. In the end, I keep focusing on my job and don't get around to it. But the editorial department keeps telling me to work with a cold stare. What to do?

There's some movement in that editorial department regarding “Rokujouma no Shinryakusha!?” It's supposed to start when this volume goes on sale, so for those interested please visit the page regarding Rokujouma on HobbyJapan's website. I said the same thing in the afterword of volume 4, but this time I'm serious. Regarding the contents of the page, as a revenge for not being able to clean up, I've pressed them really hard, and it seems that they're planning on doing something else on top of that page. I wonder what it is.

By the time of writing this afterword, all you can see on the page is a short anime of Koutarou eating ramen. Although it's short, I'm moved seeing my own work being animated. It's become the source of power, alongside the handwritten letter I received earlier. No matter what happens in the future, I'll be able to look back on these and do my best.

Since I have some room left for this afterword, I'll write some more about my current situation.

The other day I was able to see a live concert. The artist was Fukuyama Yoshiki-san. He did Basara's singing voice in Macross 7. Now that I think about it, Macross 7 was made when I was in the university. When I think about it, I remember that several years have passed. 15 years or so have passed, haven't they? That university student is now in his thirties. But Fukuyama-san's voice is just the same as it was. I felt like that was just like a star. Either way, I had a lot of fun. I was especially happy to hear “Try Again” live.

And I finally got my hands on a Blu-ray player for my own home. I also bought that movie, Avatar, that I've heard so much about. I watched it right away. This might be a little late, but Blu-Ray is on a completely different level from DVD. I was so surprised. Although it might be more beautiful, it had the same director, Cameron. The shuttles and aircraft may have been different from Alien 2, but they had kept their unique movements. It might have been on purpose since Alien 2's star, Sigourney Weaver appeared. If I'm not mistaken, Alien 2 was made over 20 years ago, yet another old tale.

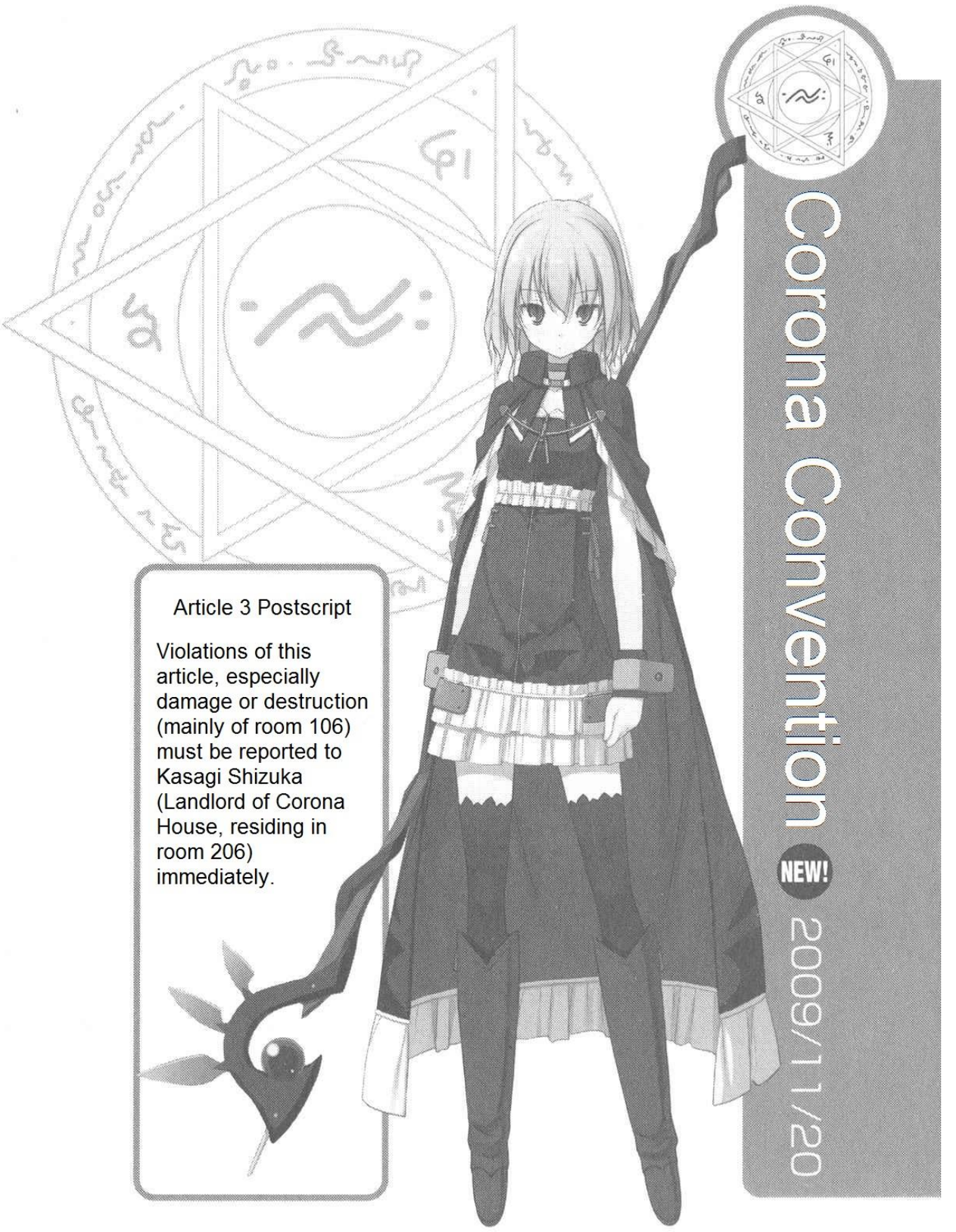
That's about it, I'm almost out of pages, so I'd like to end this afterword here.

Finally, I would like to thank the publishers who are working hard, the illustrator Poko-san who gets the work done properly every time, my friends who give me advice, and everyone who bought this novel.

Then, let us meet again in the afterword of the sixth volume.

May, 2010

Takehaya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